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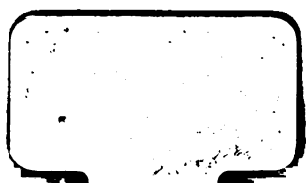
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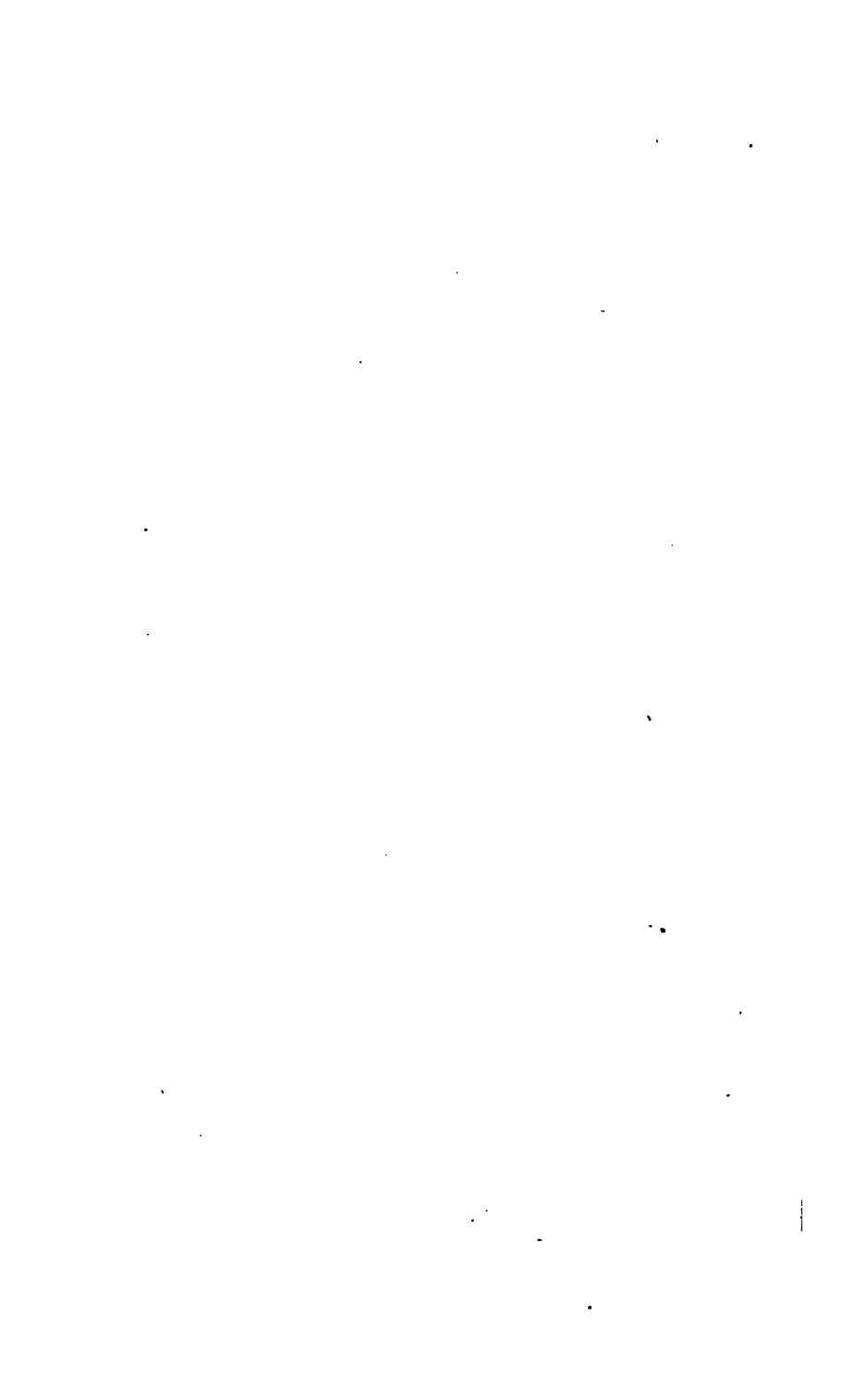














Our Title to Sonship,

AND OTHER

SERMONS,

PREACHED IN

ALL SAINTS' CHAPEL, GUERNSEY,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM MICHELL, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF CHANTRY, NEAR FROME, SOMERSET.

L O N D O N :

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
AND NEW BOND STREET;

OXFORD & LONDON; J. H. & J. PARKER;

GUERNSEY: F. LE LIEVRE;

FROME-SELWOOD: JOHN HODGES.

1864.

100. s. 63

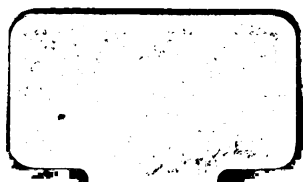
JOHN HODGES, PRINTER, FROME-SELWOOD.

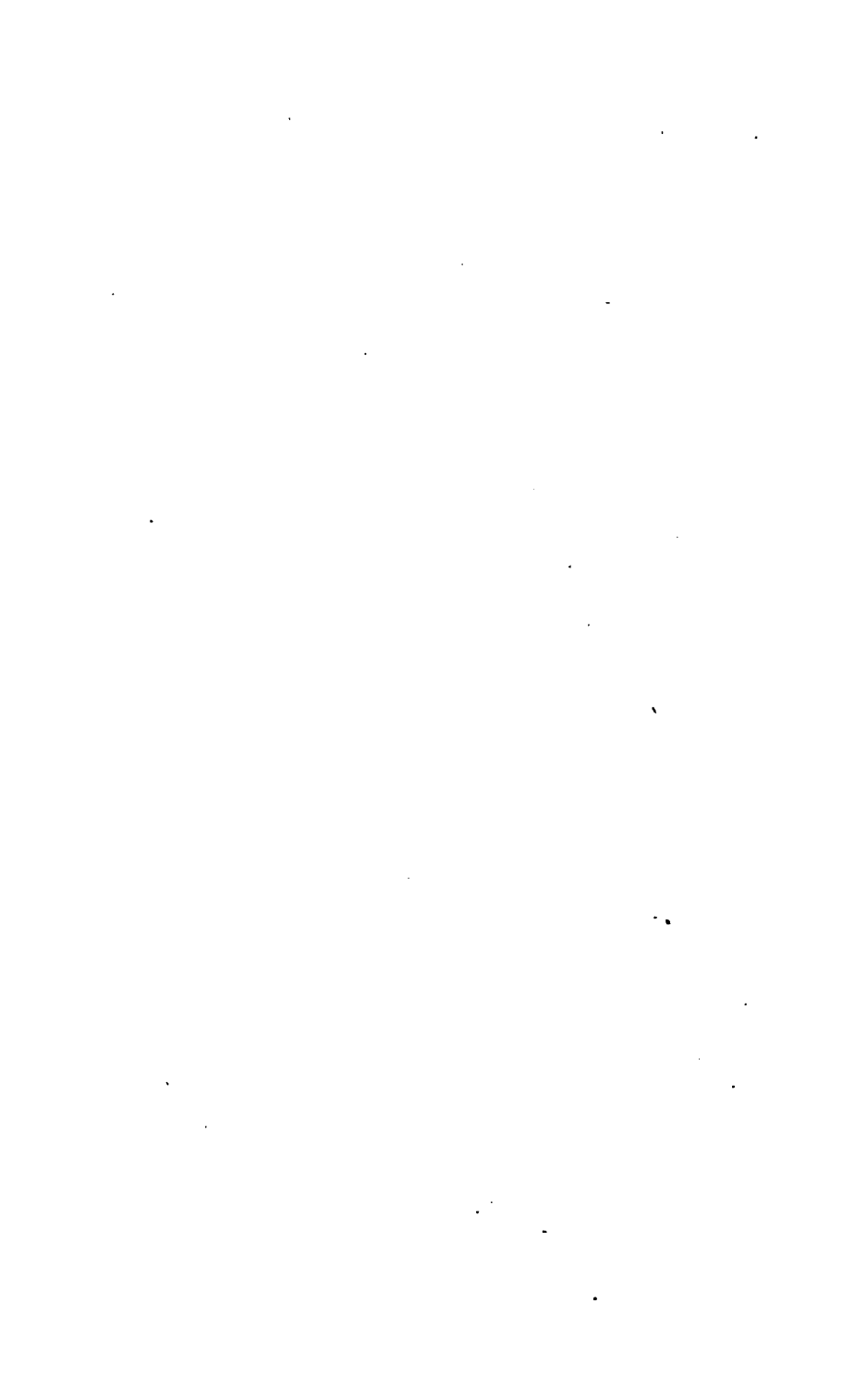


Dedication.

TO THE CONGREGATION
OF
ALL SAINTS' CHAPEL, GUERNSEY,
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF THEIR MANY KINDNESSES TO THE AUTHOR,
THESE SERMONS
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

W. M.





those who read these pages, that he with them may find mercy at that Day ; nor can he refrain from adding the following words as his own prayer for himself and for them :

O Lord Jesus Christ, whatever I have written of Thine may Thy people receive it ; Whatever of mine own, do Thou pardon it, and Thy people also. Amen.

CHANTRY,

October 25th, 1864.

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SERMON I.

Our Title to Sonship.

(Preached on the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, 1861.)

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

THE great store which the Church has ever set upon the Sacred Writings of the Inspired Apostles is fully justified to her members in the patience, and comfort, and hope, which each has found therein. We all believe that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation;” and the Church, as “the witness and keeper of Holy Writ,” requires from all who seek the office of the Priesthood an assurance that they are “persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ;—that they are determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to their charge;—and that they will teach nothing as

required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which they shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures.

Yet it is not inconsistent with our certainty, or with our gratitude, to feel regret, and perhaps surprise, at certain remarkable omissions. Within the period of those thirty-five years, the history of which is, with more or less of circumstance, contained in the books of the New Testament, the Church of Christ was founded, its truths were preached in all the known world,* hundreds of thousands of Jews and Gentiles had been converted, baptized, instructed, and built up into the knowledge, faith, love, and obedience of their Saviour Christ. In the Holy Gospels we possess the gracious words of the Lord Jesus, His public sermons, His private explanations, His invitations and rebukes, by which He drew His own unto Him, and prepared the Jewish nation for the full preaching of His Gospel. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles we possess their sermons, by which they converted first the Jews, and then the Gentiles, to the faith and obedience of Christ. Their manner of preaching, and their mode of persuasion, were adapted to these different classes of hearers. The arguments in which St. Peter appeals to the reason and conscience of the Jew are widely different from those in which St. Paul addresses the polished, and

* Romans i. 8; 1 Thess. i. 8.

over-religious Athenian, or the barbarous people of the cities of Lycaonia. We cannot read these sermons without deep interest. They supply perfect models to those who may be called upon to argue with the Jew, or to preach the gospel of the True God among heathens, whether of the highest civilization, or the most degraded barbarism. But,—we cannot forbear to ask,—where is the model for the Christian preacher? There must have been many sermons addressed to believing congregations from the lips of the Inspired Apostles and Teachers. St. Peter's burning eloquence, and St. Paul's earnest zeal, were not without ready listeners. St. Paul in the only sermon which the New Testament contains of those addressed to Christians,—and this, it may be remarked, is addressed to the Clergy only, and not to the whole congregation,—St. Paul there reminds the elders of the Church at Ephesus that by the space of three years he “ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears;” that he had “shewed them everything that was profitable, teaching them publicly, and from house to house.”^b St. Luke informs us that much of this teaching was addressed exclusively to those who were already believers; that the Apostle when at Ephesus had separated the disciples, in order to teach them without the interruption of

^b Acts xx. 17—36; see also Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

those who believed not.^c These sermons therefore were not *converting* sermons, but such as might make "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."^a We know on indisputable authority that preaching, (of a less formal character probably than that which is now in use among us), commonly accompanied the celebration of the Holy Communion, which was the chief, if not the only, service of distinctly Christian worship on the Lord's day:—the Jewish converts at Jerusalem regularly attending the temple services; all, to the number of many thousands, being zealous for the Jewish law. We have an instance of this in St. Paul's long sermon preached at Troas, when upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread.^e But we are left altogether at a loss in our speculations upon the style and manner of these sermons. We cannot find one which the Christian preacher can take as his model in addressing a congregation of believers in Christ.

This is surely a loss. We should have preferred definite statements of doctrine, the very words of the Apostles themselves, to any conclusions of our own, however legitimately drawn. For it must be admitted that far too many differences exist among Christians, both upon vital points of Christian doc-

^c Acts xix. 9.

^d 2 Tim. iii. 17.

^e Acts xx. 7.

trine, and also upon the method of bringing that truth which all hold in common before the minds of men, and of winning to Christ the souls which He died to save. We might divide the preaching of the present day into two systems; of which, the one, looking chiefly into the future, addresses a whole congregation (or a whole congregation with few exceptions), as not having yet received, and therefore as needing, the new birth, a vital union with Christ, and other blessings of His grace; the other, looking back into the past, there sees the foundation laid for its persuasion and its argument in grace already received in Holy Baptism; and addresses all the baptized as answerable to God for grace received, as having once put on Christ,^f as temples of God, and as liable to receive the greater damnation if they defile that temple, if, becoming reprobates, they put off Christ, and receive His grace in vain.

It is by the will of the Eternal Wisdom that none of the sermons addressed by the Apostles to Christian congregations have come down to us at the hands of the inspired writers. We regret it,—humbly,—for we may not dispute the wisdom of that Holy Spirit Who reserves to Himself the means whereby He will guide His Church into all the truth. And we are thankful that the letters of the Apostles remain to us, by which

^f Gal. iii. 27.

^g Eph. iv. 13.

those who believed not.^c These sermons, therefore were not *converting* sermons, but such as might make "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."^a We know on indisputable authority that preaching, (of a less formal character probably than that which is now in vogue among us), commonly accompanied the celebration of the Holy Communion, which was the chief, if not the only, service of distinction in Christian worship on the Lord's day:— Jewish converts at Jerusalem regularly attending the temple services; all, to the number of many thousands, being zealous of Jewish law. We have an instance of this in St. Paul's long sermon preached at Athens when upon the first day of the week the philosophers came together to break bread: we are left altogether at a loss in our speculations upon the style and manner of the sermons. We cannot find one in which a Christian preacher can take as his text, "addressing a congregation of Jews and Gentiles," "Christ."

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 of incorruptible, by the Word of

iii. 5. ^k Romans i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; Philip i. 2.

Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. iii. 16. ^m 2 Peter i. 4.

i. 4, 5, 11; 1 Peter i. 2; Ephes. ii. 5. ⁿ 1 Peter

we may hope to ascertain what they made the ground of their teaching, and what arguments they relied upon for preserving their Christian converts from falling away, and for bringing them into the perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.^s

There are many words of the Lord Jesus which we may not shut out from our memories in this inquiry. First in importance stand those which He addressed to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."^h How are we to explain the omission of these words in all the Apostles' writings, and in all the Apostles' sermons? Are they altogether omitted? Or is some precept to be found virtually containing the same injunction? And again, if such a precept is to be found, is it addressed to all? Or to those who have not yet given proof of a thorough change of character, and conversion to God? Or to those only who are separated by a broad, outward, and visible, line of demarcation from others who have been already born again?

I think it is undeniable that the Apostles never mention the necessity of the new birth in their writings to the Christian Churches. Why not? What will justify their omission of these most important words, which declare

^s Eph. iv. 13.

^h St. John iii. 3.

the necessity of a new birth to all that would see the kingdom of God? It can only be accounted for on the ground that those whom they addressed had been already born again. The Lord was speaking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, one who *as yet believed not*,—one who had *not yet* been washed in “the washing of regeneration,”ⁱ—of the new birth, of which St. Paul writes in his Epistle to Titus. The Apostles, on the other hand, were writing to men who had long since made their public profession of belief, who, having been baptized, had received the washing of regeneration. In these respects, the position of the Christian converts differs from that of Nicodemus. Thus we find that while the Apostles never tell the baptized Christian that he must be born again,—born of water and the Spirit,—they address him as called to be a saint; as sanctified in Christ Jesus; as a saint and holy;^k as having put on Christ in Baptism;^l as being a temple of the Holy Ghost, Who dwells in his body; as made a partaker of the Divine Nature;^m as quickened or made alive with Christ by grace;ⁿ as having been saved, *i.e.*, brought into a state of salvation, by Baptism;^o as having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of

ⁱ Titus iii. 5. ^k Romans i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; Philip i. 2.

^l Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. iii. 16. ^m 2 Peter i. 4.

ⁿ Ephes. i. 4, 5, 11; 1 Peter i. 2; Ephes. ii. 5. ^o 1 Peter iii. 21.

the living God, Which liveth and abideth for ever; as predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself; as chosen in Him before the foundation of the world; as elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; as having washed themselves clean, as having been sanctified and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit of our God; as having been justified by faith, and so possessing peace with God.^p There are no exceptions made, not even of the incestuous Corinthian, nor of those who in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion ate and drank judgment to themselves, not discerning the Lord's Body. There are no reservations, no limitations of these high titles and privileges. What, then, do they write to the professing Christian leading an ungodly life? They bid him be renewed in the spirit of his mind;^q they speak of godly sorrow working repentance;^r they complain that many have not repented of their uncleanness;^s they exhort them that are perfect to restore the fallen;^t they remind all that Jesus Christ is in them, except they be reprobates;^u they caution all, not to quench the Spirit,^v to take heed that they receive not the grace of God in vain.^w These expressions have no meaning and no force,

p 1 Peter i. 23; 1 Cor. vi. 11. Compare Acts xxii. 16; Rom. v. 1.

q Ephes. iv. 23. r 2 Cor. vii. 10. s 2 Cor. xii. 21. t Gal. vi. 1.

u 2 Cor. xiii. 5. v 1 Thess. v. 19. w 2 Cor. vi. 1.

unless the Apostles regarded all the Christians to whom they wrote, as standing, all without exception, in the same relation to God, that is, as His sons, as already born again, as having already experienced that change, whatever it be, which is signified in the Lord's words, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It may fairly be asked, "What, then is the meaning of our Lord's words; and how do they bear upon the Apostles' teaching?" Did the Apostles never say, as their Master said, to any one, that he must be born again? Certainly they did so. And to the same class of persons; to those who, like Nicodemus, were *not yet disciples*. When Nicodemus wondered what the meaning of this mysterious phrase might be, and inquired "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered and said, unto him, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* We do not find our Lord speaking in this manner to any who had been admitted into the number of His disciples. But when He gives His Apostles the command to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, then it is that He refers once more to water and the Spirit as connected with man's salvation, "baptizing

* St. John iii. 4, 5.

them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”^y Turn on a little way, and we see a multitude listening in rapt attention to St. Peter’s sermon. Pricked in their heart they cry unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said unto them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”^z Again, when Ananias came in unto Saul blinded, yet converted, and waiting to hear the Lord’s will, he first restores his sight, and immediately adds, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.”^a In every instance it is the same. The Apostles in their practice, if not in so many words, repeat to all the Jews and the Gentiles who sought admission into the benefit of Christ’s death, “Except a man be born again,—be born of water and the Spirit,—he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” They never say this to any who have already received Baptism. To the heathen and to the Jew they say, “Ye must be born again.” But to the baptized they write, “Ye must repent; ye must be renewed; ye must grow in grace, going on unto perfection. Be ye holy. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth

^y St. Matthew xxviii. 19. ^z Acts ii. 37, 38. ^a Acts xxii. 16.

in you. If any man defile the temple of God; him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." That there is a wide difference between the spoken words of St. Peter and St. Paul, and their written letters, we must admit. In their spoken words, their sermons to Jews and heathens, they look *forward* to a future gift of grace which is to be sought by their hearers. In their letters to the Christian Churches they look *back* upon grace already given and received, reminding their disciples that they have received it, and are answerable for it. We account for this difference of expression by the difference made by Baptism in man's position before God. In addressing heathen and unbaptized, we ought to take the spoken words of the Apostles, addressed to heathen, as our models. In addressing Christians we ought to take as our models the written words of the Apostles addressed to Christians; for the arguments which they used in their writings the same they must have used in their preaching.

We gather, therefore, from these differing modes of address, that there is a most important difference made in Holy Scripture between the unbaptized, and the baptized. We conclude that the Christian preacher may not address the baptized as needing to be born again; that he may not address the unbaptized as if that change had already passed

over him. The teaching of the Church of Christ was uniform upon this point for fifteen hundred years. And Scriptural truth, as thus acknowledged by the wisdom of so many centuries, is embodied for us in our Church Catechism, which teaches us that the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; that therein we were made children of grace, made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and brought into a state of salvation. We find similar expressions in the Office for Holy Baptism, in which the congregation "thank God that the baptized child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church," and make their prayer "that it may lead the rest of its life according to that beginning."

This doctrine, which I have tried to prove to you as the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and of the whole Church, has been too hard for many to believe. They have been offended at it. They have confounded other phrases with that of "regeneration," or "the new birth," as if it were the same as conversion, and full belief in Jesus Christ, and entire change of character and heart. There are several words which find a place in all religious discussions, such as regeneration, conversion, sanctification, justification, election, predestination, each of them having their particular signification. Endless discussions

have resulted from the misuse of these terms. Many persons employ the term regeneration, or the new birth, when they mean conversion. And immediately they accuse the Church of teaching that every baptized person is converted, truly changed in heart and character, serving God faithfully, inseparably united to Him in Christ, and secure of final salvation. The Church teaches nothing of the kind. She declares that the baptized have, by the working of God's Holy Spirit, been made partakers of the Christian *nature*, and that they are therefore bound to manifest the Christian *character*. Does not this teaching correspond exactly with our Lord's own words to His disciples: "I am the vine; ye are the branches. Every branch *in Me* that beareth not fruit My Father taketh away."^b It is possible, for He has said it, that we may be *in Christ*, branches in the true vine, and yet bear no fruit. This is the case with every baptized person who is living in sin. The prodigal, although he had wasted his substance in riotous living, was no less a son. Hear what God says to the rebellious Israelites: "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee." Therefore God said: "they are a very froward generation; *children in whom is no faith*."^c And again: "I have

^b St. John xv. 2, 5.

^c Deut. xxxii. 18—20.

nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me."^a

CHILDREN IN WHOM IS NO FAITH! What more awful condition can be imagined than this, when the Father is a heavenly Father, the children creatures of earth? I cannot regard that doctrine as likely to render men careless, or proud, or secure about their eternal salvation, which declares plainly that they are the temple of the living God, and that if they defile that temple, God will destroy them. On the contrary, I must ever regard it as 'one most effectual in arousing them to a fear of a greater damnation, if they should make shipwreck of faith, and live in recklessness of unclean living.

Passing on then from the testimony of Holy Scripture, and of the whole Church, from which our own Apostolic branch may never be separated, let us give a brief consideration to the working of the two systems of teaching. The one says to all men who do not experience certain feelings, and shew certain signs of acceptance and conversion, "Ye must be born again." It says that before such conversion they are not sons of God, that God is not their Father, that they have not an interest in Christ. It preaches a God Who is apart from them. But how does this argument act upon the heart and upon the conscience? What inducements

^a Isaiah i. 2.

does it offer to the sinner to put away his iniquity? He is, very often, attached to his sin, and will go on in utter presumption and defiance of all that is good, waiting for what he speaks of as an effectual call from God. It regards him, and teaches him to regard himself, as no nearer to God than the heathen who have never heard of God, as equally free from responsibility for grace given.⁶ He is therefore led to believe that he is under no obligations to God beyond that which a servant owes to a master, and will pay under the fear of punishment.

Again; how does this doctrine affect the anxious soul seeking earnestly after God? It leaves it in its suspense, uncertain whether it is a child of God or a child of the devil, doubting whether God really loves it, whether He wills its salvation. It drives the soul back into itself, into self-contemplation,—not the healthy examination of conscience, but the excited and delusive search after feelings. It substitutes feeling for faith, until the soul, unless mercifully guided into the way of humble faith and quiet obedience, is hurried into an awful presumption, or sinks down into a miserable despair. Who may tell the struggles of souls thus taught—weeping over their sins—praying for light and assurance—grasping at a comfort which they know not where to find—and, after wavering for a

⁶ See Ezek. xx. 32.

while in their choice, taking refuge in an unsatisfied belief, or in any sect which truly or falsely could bring home to their hearts any sort of assurance that they were children of God?

The other doctrine, which we believe to be alike Scriptural, and our own, meets the instincts and the wants of the human heart. The very heathen felt after God, if haply they might find Him, and feared not to assert, "We are also His offspring." What is the story of God's love in the death of Christ, what is it to us, unless we know our share in it? God will not leave His creatures and His children groping for ever in the dark. The disciples were bidden to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Sacrament of Baptism testified to all men that there was a Father in heaven Who loved them all; that Jesus, the Son of God, died for all; that the Holy Spirit was ready to work in all. It grafted the believer, and the believer's children, into Christ. It buried them into Christ's death. In it they put on Christ. By it they were brought into a state of salvation. And ever afterwards, whenever the Apostles address the baptized, it is as God's dear children; as prodigal sons it may be, if they have fallen, but, for

good or for evil, eternally the children of God. Mark how St. Paul, reminding the baptized man that he is in Christ, refers to Baptism as the ground of his hope, the foundation of his responsibility, as the reason, if he fall away, of a most awful end.

We make our Baptism the ground of comfort and of warning. If you are earnestly desiring to serve God, crying out amid much imperfect obedience, much feeble faith, many falls, and many tears, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love thee,"—we, as ambassadors for Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of God,^g tell you plainly that you are, by virtue of your Baptism, one of God's dear children, one of Christ's redeemed, one of the sealed and anointed of the Holy Spirit.^h

But if you should be tempted by the evil one to presume upon these privileges, to rest in idle watchfulness, or, worse still, to continue in sin that grace may abound,ⁱ we, knowing the terrors of the Lord, beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain, but, in fear and trembling, work out your own salvation, and give diligence to make your calling and election sure.^j For if you neglect this divine gift,—if you do not, by virtue of your new birth, and new nature, resist and overcome the old carnal and cor-

^g 2 Cor. v. 20; 1 Cor. iv. 1. ^h Ephes. i. 13, 14; 1 St. John ii. 20.

ⁱ Rom. vi. 1.

^j Phil. ii. 12; 2 St. Peter i. 10.

rupt nature,—if through sin and impenitence you allow a character the very opposite to that of Christ to grow up in you, not only do you lose salvation, and every blessing which your Baptism has conferred upon you, but you load yourselves with a guilt which could not possibly have been yours unless you had been made partakers of the Divine Nature. Surely, as it is a very blessed, so it is a very awful thing, to be made a Christian, to know that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Does not this shew us the exceeding sinfulness of sin more than anything, the fact, that by sin, above all by sins of *the flesh*, we are taking the very members of Christ, and making them the members of sin, servants to iniquity.* It tells not only of the *presence* of God, but of the *indwelling* of God in us. Baptism is the very ground and encouragement of all Christian education, from the earliest moral training to the final hour of life. There are sins which we hesitate to name from the pulpit, of which we fear to warn even in private, or only with the most cautious reserve, lest we should teach the knowledge of evil to the pure and innocent soul. But, if we wish our children and our loved ones to be preserved from such sins, we cannot too early press upon them that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that reverence is to be paid to Him that

* 1 Cor. vi. 15.

dwelleth therein. It will not be necessary to mention sins by name. Say to them, "What you would not do if I were by, do not do it when alone, for you are in the presence of God; and He is as much within you as your own soul." It was the answer of a little child, who broke off in the middle of a grievous sin: "I recollected that I was the temple of the Holy Ghost; and I left off, ashamed, what I was doing." It cannot be too solemnly impressed upon children, nor indeed upon grown people, "Reverence the Presence of God within you." The teaching extends to all sin; since all sin of thought is committed in the soul where God especially dwells; all lies or words of sin are spoken and listened to, all deeds of anger, violence, or any other sin, are done by, members of that body which Christ has made the temple of the Holy Ghost. How among us elders would backbitings, or unloving, or vain, or proud words cease, if we recollected that our tongues were members of the body wherein Christ dwells! How should we cease from longing for outward distinction, from petty pride and jealousies, if we recollected, what is the Christian's glory and unspeakable exaltation, that Christ dwelleth in us, and we in Him!¹

If I did not believe this, Brethren, I know not where I should stand. I should yet be

¹ See Preface to Pusey's Sermons, Vol. I.

at a loss to know whether I were a child of God ; whether I had an interest in the Blood of Jesus ; whether by the power of the Holy Spirit my weakness might at last prevail to lay hold on eternal life. But I believe firmly that in my Baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. I believe that in my Baptism there was granted to me a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. I believe that, being by nature born in sin, a child of wrath, I was thereby made a child of grace. I thank God that I do believe it. And I pray to Him in humility and fear for myself, for all whom He has given me, and for you, Brethren, that we may never defile the temple of God, or that, having defiled it, we may be converted and restored. I pray to Him that we may not quench the Spirit, or receive His grace in vain, lest we fall away unto perdition; lest we be found children in whom is no faith, branches in whom is no fruit, twice dead ; to be, when His long-suffering is exhausted, cut off, and cast away for ever ; to have our portion with the unbelievers in that outer darkness where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

SERMON II.

The Desire to see Jesus.

(Preached in Advent, 1863.)

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”—St. John xii. 21.

“SIR, we would see Jesus.” What a simple, natural request it is! How it seems to be the very expression of the desire which we should have felt if we had found ourselves at Jerusalem in that great week of the Passover. You will observe that the words were spoken on one of the days following our Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The attention of the Jews was now more than ever fixed upon Him on account of His great miracle—the raising of Lazarus—worked in the presence of so many. They went out to Bethany in large numbers all through the earlier days of the week that they might see Jesus, and Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. But these Greeks, being foreigners, “proselytes of the gate,” (for so the believing Gentiles were called in the religious lan-

guage of the day) probably received little encouragement to attach themselves to any company of the Jews. They must make opportunity for themselves ; and there would be no great difficulty in this, for the Lord was in and out of Jerusalem every day. On this day, as on other days, He had been into the Temple working miracles, healing the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf and dumb, teaching the people, and rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees. These Greeks were forbidden by the ceremonial law to enter the inner court of the Temple, which was reserved for the Jews alone. They had seen the Lord pass through the court of the Gentiles into the inner court of the Jews. They had perhaps watched, with very pardonable, because reverent, curiosity, the lame dragging their feeble limbs into the Temple, and had seen them return after a word from Jesus, walking, and leaping, and praising God. They had watched the blind groping timidly, or led by a guide, and had seen them, after standing a moment before the True Light, return seeing. They had heard His words taken up in wondering awe by the bystanders, and perhaps had caught from afar some faint echo of the voice of Him Who spake as never man spake. All this, the confirmation of the reports concerning His miracles, which had spread throughout the whole land, and even beyond, and especially the raising of

Lazarus, inspired them with a most earnest desire to "see Jesus." So they came to His disciples. "Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." Evidently they were struck with such a request on the part of men of a Gentile race. The Lord Himself receives the application as a new homage, a new recognition of His glory by representatives of the Gentile world. His words, on hearing the request, are so remarkable, that St. John in recording them, has failed to tell us whether the Lord admitted these Greeks into His presence or not. But we feel assured that He Who was lifted up on the Cross that He might draw all men unto Him, would not send such petitioners empty away.

In reading this short history, we are carried back in thought to the Almighty's wonderful dealings with His people in the wilderness. There Moses had preferred His request, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." That glory no man could see and live. The request of Moses was accepted in this answer, "I will make all My *goodness* pass before thee."^m The promise given to Moses was now fulfilled again to the children of the chosen people. The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man had appeared.ⁿ We, too, my Brethren, desire to see His goodness and His glory. We, too, would see

^m Exod. xxxiii. 18.

ⁿ Titus iii. 4.

Jesus. What pledge can we find that He will grant us our heart's desire? To whom did He shew Himself? There is Simeon, the aged, who had waited for the consolation of Israel. Being led by the Holy Spirit into the temple, there He beheld the Lord's Christ. But then we remember that He was one of singular sanctity. We cannot venture to claim equal privileges with him. We humbly acknowledge the difference between him in his life of holy, watchful, waiting, and ourselves, who, so many of us, would see Jesus. We must look for other encouragements. Well, then, His disciples saw Him. True; but they were especially called. With regard to them we understand at once the truth of the Lord's word, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." He manifested Himself to them, and not unto the world. Will He manifest Himself to us? Or are we of the world? We would have an example of His shewing Himself to some one more like ourselves. Then let us think of one who sought to see Jesus who He was, a man chief among the publicans, who climbed up into the sycamore tree to see Jesus, and in whose house Jesus abode that day. And, comparing him with these Greeks who wished to see Jesus, let us take courage, assured that such a wish on our part will be granted to us by Him Whose face we desire to look upon.

• St. John xiv. 22.

But,—have we really this desire? Now and then, on Sunday nights, as I look around, and see the many souls met together within these sacred walls, I feel almost constrained to ask the questions, “Whom seek ye? “What is your purpose in coming hither?” As the Lord Himself asked of those who went forth to see, and to hear, the Holy Baptist, so He would have the same question asked now, “What have ye come out for to see?” What is your motive,—your real motive, in coming to Church? Have you come here for form’s sake? Or for curiosity? Do you expect to be gratified with enticing words of man’s wisdom? I would hope that there is little of such feelings. They are at best, but of the earth. In the house of God the Christian’s one great desire should be, of course, “We would see Jesus.”

Not that such a desire should be confined to certain places, and to fixed hours. Do not fall into such a terrible mistake as this. The soul which truly loves her Redeemer knows no time, or place, in which she would not see Him. As He has loved her with an everlasting love, so does she pour forth continually her cravings of desire for His presence. She would learn to see Him everywhere, and in everything; and therefore prays Him to open her eyes, lest, like Mary in the garden, she should see Him, and know Him not. She does everything as in His

presence, and for His sake. Nevertheless, remembering and embracing His promise that, where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of them, she seeks Him specially in His own house, among those who love and worship Him there ; and humbly adoring, is occupied in the one absorbing desire of her whole being—she would see Jesus.

However, the experience of our hearts scarcely reaches so high as this. We feel, perhaps, that we have not attained to this perfection. We feel that long hours flit away amid the busy employments of life in which our souls are not thus lifted up. We know, perhaps, that in long days, or weeks, or even months, it is only *occasionally, now and then, once in a way*, that we feel this longing desire to see Jesus ; that is only after having been aroused by some striking sermon, some spirit-stirring book, some sudden and serious accident, some severe anxiety, some heavy despondency, that we say from the heart, "When shall I come to appear before the presence of my Lord?" Yet *then*, at any rate, we have the conviction that He can do more for us than any other, and "we would see Jesus."

Then I would ask you, one and all : What do you mean by this request ? Why do you desire to see Him ? What do you wish Him to do ? Perhaps you put your own meaning upon these words, and are praying with

Moses, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory." You would see Him, and kneel before Him, and ask, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may attain eternal life?" You would ask Him, as the sons of Zebedee asked Him, for the seat on the right hand, or on the left, in His glory. Shall you be satisfied, if, instead of manifesting forth His glory, as He did to St. Stephen and to St. John, He should appear to you as He first appeared to Simon the Cyrenian, and lay His cross upon you that you may bear it after Him? Shall you be content if, perchance, He bids you sell all that you have and give to the poor, and follow Him? Shall you be ready to leave father, and mother, wife and children, houses and lands, to hate your own life, for His sake, and the Gospel's? The Jews desired to see a glorified King. They saw Jesus; they rejected Him and crucified Him. If you are sure that you would see Jesus, think once more, and seriously, of what may be involved in that desire; and answer honestly to your own conscience, "Do I wish to see Jesus, whatever He may do for me, or bid me do for Him? Or, do I merely long to find glory and gain, certainty and comfort and pleasure, from the Lord of glory, the Giver of all good things?"

We will suppose that you have answered this question, that conscience declares itself prepared to *bear all things for His sake*; the

next point is, How shall we come to Him? What are the conditions on which He will admit us to His presence? Will He not banish us away if we come improperly? Must we not have the wedding garment on?

I know not, my Brethren, where He has made any such conditions as need keep us one moment from His presence, if we really would see Him. These Greeks must have had at best but a very imperfect knowledge of Him. Even His Apostles were at this time very far from comprehending the depths of the mystery of God made man. The poor woman with the issue of blood imagined that she might obtain healing from Him without His perceiving it. The woman that was a sinner dared to bring an offering of love, and was accepted. The Lord's invitation by Isaiah was addressed to *all* who thirsted. He does not cry, Ho! every one that thirsteth *for the living water*, but, "Ho! every one that thirsteth,—simply thirsteth,—come ye; as if the sense of need was in itself a qualification." The invitation from His own lips is to *all* who labour, and are heavy-laden, seeking rest they know not where. He will manifest Himself, and lead them, giving them refreshment and rest. Whoever stands in need, whatever his need may be, let him come to Jesus. Let him cry, "Shew us the

light of Thy countenance," and the Lord will make him whole.

Strangely enough, too, it does not appear a necessary condition of obtaining a blessing from Him that the soul should have felt the desire to see Jesus before finding herself in His presence. There was one, a sinful woman, taken in the very act of her sin, and dragged before Him by her accusers for judgment. One word from Him sent them away convicted by their own consciences; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. There she saw Him, face to face, alone. What sentence will He pronounce, He Who knows all her sin? The words which fall upon her shamed and anxious ear are words of mercy, if not of absolution, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."^a The only conditions seem to be those of need, sorrow, and suffering, and of willingness to receive healing, and comfort, and teaching from Him.

Surely every one in need and sorrow would see Jesus. These He invites. To these He will speak gracious words, and do good. There were nevertheless many who saw Him to whom He spoke hard and terrible words. These were such as came to look at Him out of mere curiosity, out of pride and self-sufficiency, thinking that they were rich, and had need of nothing. Among these may be

^a St. John viii. 11.

numbered Herod, the Tetrarch, who, hearing of all that was done by Jesus, desired to see Him; and "when Herod saw Jesus he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him."^r Herod, seated with his men of war about him, at last sees Jesus brought a prisoner into his presence. Now his wishes are, at last, gratified. He will have speech with this man, Who, so the people say, speaks as never man spoke. He will see some mighty work done by Him, at Whose bidding the powers of death have released their prey. "Then he questioned with Him in many words. But He answered nothing." The many words of the wicked ruler elicit no reply. The Lord will not speak. Herod is the only one before whom Jesus maintains this unbroken silence. Oh! terrible punishment of the vain, unholy, wish to behold the Saviour! Herod cared only to see the worker of miracles, the strange teacher. He had no desire for the carpenter's son, for the meek and lowly, the rejected of men, and yet the Saviour of sinners. Therefore the Life itself was to him the savour of death unto death. Better never to see Him at all than to see Him with profane and dishonouring thoughts. But if you seek "Jesus, Who shall save His people from

^r St. Luke ix. 7—9; xxiii. 8.

their sins." fear not to come before His presence.

Yet come not without preparation if you can make it. Come not again, and again, dishonouring Him, clothed from first to last in the old garments stained by sin. If we were to receive an invitation to appear in the palace of our earthly Sovereign, how proud and glad we should be! What pains we should take to ascertain all the regulations, all the ceremonial to be observed! How cheerfully should we expend the money necessary for providing a suitable and handsome dress! We should never dream of going in the clothes soiled with the dust and toil of our worldly trade; least of all should we think of going into the presence of our Queen wearing the uniform of an enemy, like a deserter and a traitor. And yet, unhappily, is it not the fact that we often go into the presence of the Lord Jesus, in the thousand opportunities which He gives us of meeting Him, careless of any preparation, our hearts clad, not in the armour of light, not in robes of fine linen, white and clean, washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb by repentance and confession of sin, but in garments torn and soiled by contact with the world, trimmed with the sinful finery of pride and vanity, patched with hypocrisy. And sometimes,—worse still!—we come thrusting ourselves before our

Heavenly King, dressed in the uniform, and armed with the weapons, of His greatest enemy, the prince of darkness and this world, paying Christ a homage of body, and of lip, while plotting against Him in our inmost heart. Oh! beware of this. And yet if you find yourself before Him, smitten with the sense of your sins, do not go forth from His presence as Judas did. Rather, throw yourself on your knees before Him in humblest penitence, that He may cast the devil out of your heart, and that men may see you henceforth ever near Him, sitting unclothed of your sins, and clothed in His righteousness, altogether His.

Again;—Where can we see Jesus? Ask, instead, where we cannot see Him? Look around on the myriad wonders in this beautiful world. Look upwards, and consider the works of His fingers, the moon and the stars which He has ordained. Hath not His hand made all these things? Do they not declare His glory, and His goodness too? Surely, yes. But in pity for our weakness and our imperfect faculties He manifests Himself more closely to us. Not only in the book of nature, but in the book of revelation also, we may see Him. For this purpose the holy Evangelists wrote the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the object of all of Apostles and Evangelists, pastors and teachers, bishops, priests and deacons; of the whole

Church, and every minister ; of each Sacrament and holy rite ; that, by these, the world might see Jesus. Therefore the Church reads to her children the precious words telling of His life and death. Therefore she records His gracious assurance that where two or three are gathered together in His Name there He is in the midst of them. Therefore does she command her priests to stand at the altar shewing forth the Lord's death until His coming again, giving us to eat His Flesh, and drink His Blood, bidding us see by faith that which the fleshly eye is unable to discern. Blessed was St. Thomas, in that he was permitted to see, and to handle, the Body of the risen Lord. More blessed we, who having not seen yet have believed ; who, by faith, discerning Jesus present, eat and drink to the strengthening and refreshing of our souls.

Does He not, moreover, permit us to see Him in many other ways as well as in this greatest, most transcendent mystery ? He reveals Himself in proportion to our faith. What, for example, is Prayer, but the out-pouring of the heart's whole and intensest desires to Jesus ? Those saints who have prayed most tell us that they prayed not to an absent God, but to a God Who is " a very present help in trouble." They would kneel at the foot of the Cross, and there placing

themselves in the very presence of God, "as seeing Him Who is invisible," they would shut off the external world entirely. They could see by their faith, hardly less clearly than the Apostles saw Him upon earth, Jesus standing on the right hand of God, listening to their prayers, and assuring them of His loving mediation and intercession.

So, again, in Meditation, His saints could picture Him to their mind's eye more really and truly than we can recall the features of the friend who left us only yesterday. It was a superhuman power, no doubt, given them from above. But this power has been, and surely still is, given to many who have exercised their imagination entirely, or almost entirely, in meditating upon their Saviour. Holy Scripture gives them the outline, Prayer and Meditation fill in the picture. And their desire to see Jesus is gratified.

So it may be to us, Brethren, if we desire aright. Not as the traitorous Scribes and Pharisees; not as the mocking officers and soldiers; not as curious Herod; not as the gazing and jesting multitude, who saw Him, and yet saw Him not; but as those who, like Abraham, saw Him and were glad.

This our desire will be granted in two ways. In this world, we will hope, in mercy and salvation; but, whether or not in this world, most certainly, to our salvation or damnation, in the world to come.

And in this world thus. There is the Saviour's promise, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now we cannot suppose that this especial privilege of the pure in heart refers exclusively, or almost exclusively, to the next world. The Christian's life is, even now, in Christ; weak and imperfect it may be, but still it is the same life, being in Christ. Therefore the sight of God, and so of Jesus, is a promise to our souls for this world. May He give us all such pure hearts, and so purge our eyes, that we may henceforth know Him, and see Him.

Once more;—God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, Who is declared to be our great example. If the work of grace is going on within us, "we all are beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."^s It is not only the promise, but the will, of the Lord that His servants should see Him. They could not follow Him, they could not imitate Him, unless, in some way, they saw Him. Woe unto us, therefore, if we have not this desire; or, if, having the desire, we rest contented without winning the blessing. If we see not Jesus, we shall not be able to imitate Him. If we are not like Him, when He comes, He will not acknowledge us as His own.

^s 2 Cor. iii. 18,

Oh, how vast is the request, "Sir, we would see Jesus!" see Him, not only with our mortal eyes, not only with the eye of intellect and of knowledge, but with the eye of love. How blessed is their privilege who, having obtained their desire, can say, wondering at His grace to them, "Lord, how is it that Thou dost manifest Thyself to us, and not unto the world?"—who, when an unbelieving world says, "Make us gods, for as for this Jesus we wot not what is become of Him," can reply in the words of the Song of Songs, "Behold, He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, shewing Himself through the lattice,"^t—who need not ask, "Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," knowing that whoso hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father. "And this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

Supposing that He has condescended to shew Himself thus to us, what must we do? What effect is the sight and contemplation of Jesus likely to have upon us? Do you remember two unlearned and ignorant men, who had seen Jesus, and are represented as at that time standing before the high priest's court at Jerusalem? Their judges marvelled at them, and "took knowledge of them that they *had been with Jesus*."^u It ought to be so, it can hardly fail to be so, with you, if you

^t Cant. ii. 9.

^u Acts iv. 19.

have seen Him. The plant that has grown up in the bright sunshine and warmth is different, how different ! from that which has struggled up under the dark shadow, feeble, colourless, flowerless, and fruitless. If you have grown up in the bright light of His countenance you ought to be like the former. There should be strong growth, fair flowers, good fruit. There should be likeness to Him in everything. You have seen Him obedient to the will of His Father in heaven. You have seen Him prayerful, loving and benevolent in action, meek and lowly, patient and forgiving in suffering. Are you, dear Brethren, prayerful, loving, meek, and forgiving too ? Do men, when they look upon you, take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus ? Do they say of you, "Thou also wast with Jesus?" If it be not so, we cannot help thinking that, although you have seen Him, you have found no beauty in Him that you should desire Him. You love Him not, because His face is swollen with buffetings, and defiled with spitting ; because His brows are bleeding from the crown of thorns. You have seen where, and what He was, and you have denied, "I do not know the man."

If this be so with you, God grant that the Lord Jesus may look upon you, as He looked upon Peter, and that you may repent, and go out, and weep bitterly.

Nevertheless, hereafter you shall see Him, though you love not His appearing now, and fear the teaching of the Advent Season. Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. The unfaithful servant shall stand face to face with the Judge, and then be cast out of His presence for ever.

But, for those who have seen Him here, and have loved Him, for all those who love His appearing, no need then to go to Philip or to Andrew with the request, "Sir, we would see Jesus." The Lord, Who has looked upon them, and loved them, will call them to His side in tenderest words of welcome. There, they will be made like Him, seeing Him as He is. Their eyes shall see the King in His beauty, strengthened to look into His light, and His glory. The long desire of earth is rewarded with the perfect enjoyment of eternity, where His risen and rewarded people, filled with the fulness of joy, shall worship ever in His presence, their hearts knowing but this one love, and this one desire,—they "would see Jesus."

SERMON III.

The Obedience of Christ's Life and Element in His Sacrifice.

(*Preached Epiphany, 1864.*)

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all."—Heb. x. 10.

IN the holy season of Epiphany the several manifestations of our Lord Jesus Christ, and their purposes, are brought before us by the Gospels as the subjects for each week's meditation. They declare His wisdom, His glory, and His power, in the Light which lightened the Gentile Kings, in His conversation with the doctors in the temple, in His miracles of changing the water into wine, healing the sick, cleansing the leper, and stilling the tempest, and in His terrible return to judgment.

But we can scarcely forbear to ask, "If His manifestation unto men was so remarkable in wisdom, so glorious in power, and so abundant in mercy, what was the meaning and purpose of those thirty long years of

in retirement at Nazareth? By the Lord's own shewing, men do not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but they put it on a candlestick that all that are in the house may see the light. He commanded the disciples, as being the light of the world, to let their light shine before men. And He Himself was, far more than they, the "Light of the world," "that Light, the True Light, which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."v Well may we wonder that all these years, while the world lay in darkness and the shadow of death, He remained at Nazareth, the carpenter, the son of Mary and Joseph, subject unto them; growing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God, and man; so far as we can judge, unmarked among boys, unmarked as He grew older, among young men. St. Luke supplies the mention of His journey to Jerusalem at the age of twelve years, of His wise questionings and replies, and His mysterious answer to His mother's sorrowing reproach. The same Evangelist makes one other reference to the Lord's earlier life. It was soon after His temptation that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as His custom

v St. John i. 9.

was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.”^w

We could wish to know what else it was His custom to do, that we might trace the path of this just one from His cradle, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Nevertheless, it has not pleased the Holy Spirit to hand down to us by any inspired writer the events of those thirty years. From the return out of Egypt and their settlement in Nazareth to the twelfth year of the Saviour’s life there is told us nothing. A journey to Jerusalem, three days’ stay in the Temple courts, a few mysterious words spoken to His sorrowing mother, a homeward journey to Nazareth; and again the veil is dropped, and all is dark and still. We see Him not, we hear Him not, for eighteen years; until the silence is broken by the voice of St. John the Baptist, “Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sins of the world.” May we not say with the prophet in our astonishment, “Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, our Saviour.”^x

The thought of this hidden life of the Saviour of the world may well inspire surprise, and, with surprise, a distrust of human reasonings, and human calculations. Love for men had brought the Son of God from heaven. The Word was made Flesh, and was dwelling among us. He, Whom the

^w St. Luke iv. 14—16.

^x Isaiah xlv. 15.

heaven of heavens could not contain, did not abhor the Virgin's womb. He Who, in His government of the world, left not Himself without witness in any one of those four thousand years, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons filling our hearts with joy and gladness,^y did now, being made flesh, leave Himself for a time without witness of this His infinite condescension. He withdrew Himself from the sight and memory of the men whom He came to save to the obscurity of a country village. He Whose heart was filled with compassion for the fainting multitude, Who, looking on the rich young man, loved him, Who was grieved at the hardness of heart and unbelief by which men refused salvation, He, throughout those thirty years, worked no miracles, spoke no words, gave no sign. He, Who must work the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, kept (so to speak) one long preparatory Sabbath. He, Who had a baptism of Blood to be baptized with,—and how was He straitened until it should be accomplished!^z—hid Himself, as it were loath to provoke the contest, and hasten on the agony. A world was to be saved. The great work, purposed so long ago, was begun, and now stood still through the absence of the Mighty Worker. If we suffered ourselves to judge after the manner of men, we might cry out

^y Acts xiv. 17.

^z St. Luke xii. 50.

in misery, in agony of mind and body, in impatience and despair, almost in indignation, "What is the purpose of these fruitless years? To what purpose is this waste? Think of the sick who might have been healed, the mourners who might have been comforted, the ignorant who might have been taught, the sinners who might have been converted and saved." Yet the sick languished in their sufferings; the mourners exhausted their grief; the ignorant learned not the things which belonged to their peace; the sinners were not converted. The salvation of Israel tarried, and came not.

We might account for it sufficiently by reminding ourselves that God's ways are not our ways, and that we cannot by searching find out God. Yet I doubt whether it be perfect humility, or perfect reverence, always to pass by God's mysterious dealings in this hasty manner. There is much in His government of the world which we can never hope to understand here, much in which we must trust implicitly to His wisdom and His love, looking forward to the day when we shall know even as also we are known. What He does we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. Our Lord spoke in parables that the people whose ears were dull of hearing might hear and not understand. Still His invitation was always, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear," even as God in the

Old Testament bids His servant, "Acquaint thyself with Him, and be at peace."^a We are permitted therefore, if indeed we are not enjoined, to search and ponder those things which are revealed, that we may, through the help of the Holy Spirit, understand daily more of the deep things of God.

How then shall we account for thirty years spent in seeming idleness in the midst of a suffering and perishing world? What lesson of profit shall we gain from the contemplation of the hidden life of Jesus at Nazareth?

We must turn away for a moment to consider the purpose for which the Son of God came into the world. Very imperfect, and, so far as they are imperfect, false, and dangerous views of the Saviour's great work have at various times found acceptance with the human heart. Few, perhaps none, of us are large-sighted enough to receive the whole counsel of God in the exact relation of all its parts one towards the other. We have, perhaps, our favourite doctrines, as we have our favourite texts, our favourite subjects of meditation, our favourite prayers. The one universal burden which presses most heavily, and upon all, is the sense of sin. We all cry out, if we have any faith, and love, and hope at all, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We all know, if not by experience

^a Job xxii. 21.

at least by desire, that Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, and we thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Whatever else we individually dwell upon, we all turn to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this we hope. In this we glory. We take up the Apostle's words, "I am determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."^b Mark this, however, that imperceptibly we may drift away from the sense in which St. Paul used these words. We may forget that the Cross is the centre of the world's salvation, and may, through partial and one-sided views, speak and act as if that tremendous mystery had superseded all else; as if Calvary were the only battle field; as if the thirty years before, and the forty days after, were unconnected with it; as if eternity were not the preparation for it; as if the everlasting years to come were not the season of growth and harvest from that seed time. St. Paul's preaching and letters taken together form his commentary on that text, "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He preached Christ crucified indeed, for our sins; yet he preached Christ risen again for our justification. He preached, also, Christ born of a woman, learning obedience through the things which He suffered, holy, harmless,

^b 1 Cor. ii. 2.

undefiled, separate from sinners, come to do the will of God ; Christ, living first, that He might afterwards die for us. He preached and glorified the Saviour's perfect obedience to that will "by the which we are sanctified, through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all."

What I mean, then, is this. In our desire as sinners for reconciliation with God, we naturally turn to the Cross of Christ, on which was made that one perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. In our thankfulness we praise and magnify the Crucified Saviour. In our jealousy for His Honour in the Atonement made by His most precious Blood we find language all too mean to express Its power, and our trust in It. Are we wrong in doing so? God forbid that we should imagine so for one moment. The Cross is the Christian's hope. It is the sign of his salvation, the standard of his warfare, the sceptre of his King. But the work of our salvation was neither begun there, nor ended there. We must not speak, we must not think, of the Sacrifice of the Cross as if it won our salvation by the mere suffering of a bleeding and tortured form ; as if an irritated and threatening God could scarcely be persuaded to lay aside His wrath ; as if the love and sacrifice of the Son were to be contrasted with the fury and the vengeance of

the Father. To know the doctrine of the Cross we must go back at least to the time before the Incarnation, before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. We ought to go back to the first sacrifices which fallen man offered before the cherubim outside the gates of Eden. Nay, more; we ought to commence with the eternal thought of the mystery which from the beginning of the world was hid in God,^c the mystery of God manifest in the Flesh. Though man fell, yet God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world. We are encouraged by holy writers to believe that if man had never fallen, his exaltation would still have been bestowed upon him not otherwise than through the Flesh of God the Son, so that by His incarnation men should be made partakers of the Divine Nature. Be this as it may, we know certainly that man, having fallen, is restored only through the Flesh of the same Jesus Christ offered by the Son to the Father as the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The decree of Divine Justice had gone forth upon the sin of man, that without shedding of Blood is no remission of sin. By all, in every age, who claimed to be sons of God sacrifice was offered year by year continually. But it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. This, I

^c Ephes. iii. 9.

would have you observe, is the argument of the tenth chapter of this Epistle to the Hebrews. There was no inherent virtue in the blood of slain beasts to take away sin, to purge the conscience, to justify and sanctify. Those sacrifices were but types. And they were offered by the true believer, the Israel of God, and accepted by God, only as connected with the Sacrifice upon the Cross, as resting upon it, although it was not yet completed, and as deriving by anticipation all their virtue from it. The wise and good of all ages knew this, and looked onwards from the shadow to the very image and reality. David's words declare it plainly. In the fifty-first Psalm it is written, "For Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it Thee, but Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Again we hear him, in the fortieth Psalm, speaking by the Holy Spirit in anticipation, and in the person of Christ, the very words quoted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not,—that is, comparatively, for God had Himself enjoined all these sacrifices by Moses,—but Mine ears hast Thou opened," or "a Body hast Thou prepared Me." Whatever the meaning we attach to these words of the Psalm, "Mine ears hast Thou opened," they imply a de-

mand of obedience on the one side, and a readiness to offer that obedience on the other. They have been referred to the slave's renewal of allegiance to his master, upon which the ear was pierced with an awl in token of renewed, and perpetual, servitude. And this reference cannot be lightly set aside, when we remember that "He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross," which was peculiarly a slave's death. But the words may signify merely,—Mine ears hast thou opened, so that I might understand and obey Thy will. Under either interpretation the verse clearly implies that obedience is better than sacrifice. Then the Psalmist continues, "Burnt offering and sacrifice for sin hast Thou not required; Then said I, Lo! I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) that I should fulfil Thy will, O my God. I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within my heart."^a In the Epistle to the Hebrews these verses are quoted with the paraphrase, "a Body hast Thou prepared for Me," in place of the words, "Mine ears hast Thou opened." They are repeated a little lower down, with the brief comment, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second," *i.e.*, He taketh away the offerings of the law that He may establish the Will of God. Then follows our

^a Psalm xl. 6—8.

text ; " By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all."

In this obedience of the Man Christ Jesus throughout His earthly life to the Will of the Father lies the power of His sacrifice. There was a shedding of blood in the sacrifices of bulls and of goats. There would have been a shedding of blood, if any of the children of men had chosen to undergo death, which Moses and St. Paul would cheerfully have done, for the sake of their brethren. " But no man may deliver his brother, or make agreement unto God for him. For it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever."^e The sacrifices of the law were required to be without blemish and without spot. Now all men had sinned. All men owed God a death by virtue of the sentence, " In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The victim offered in sacrifice was required to be pure, without spot or stain of sin, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, qualified by a perfect obedience to offer Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. And now, perhaps, you will see how the hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth is connected with the Sacrifice upon the Cross. You will see how He was not idle, not forgetful, but, from the first, working up to the

^e Psalm xlix. 7.

completion of His mighty task ; learning obedience ; being made perfect by suffering ; every day offering up His will to the Eternal Father ; winning the salvation of a ruined world even by being subject unto Joseph and Mary.

He came to do the will of the Father. Therefore a body was prepared for Him, a body of obedience, the form of a slave. The blood of bulls and of goats could not save us, because there is no connection between us and them. He was made very man, was born of a woman, wearing our nature, that He might be the second Adam, the representative man. His death was to be the death of a sinless human nature, which, being excepted from the punishment of death by reason of its entire sinlessness, might therefore be qualified to bear instead the punishment due from our sinful flesh. He died for all. But the value and the power of His death depended as well upon the previous perfect obedience of His life as upon the perfect greatness of the Person in Whom the Human nature was united with the Divine. He, Who dying upon the Cross made this most precious offering of Himself in behalf of His brethren, had fulfilled all righteousness. He was the Holy One of God ; Holy in His Infancy and His childhood, in His youth and in His manhood ; subject unto His ear parents ; subject unto every ordinance of

for the Lord's sake. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Every virtue, every grace, was perfect in His Flesh. During all those thirty years He was doing the will of Him that sent Him, that He might be the beloved Son in Whom the Father was well pleased. He was baptized by His servant John that so He might fulfil all righteousness. He was tempted of the devil, and overcame him, so that the evil spirits, knowing and fearing His power, bore open witness that He was the Holy One of God, and besought Him not to torment them before the time. Thus it was that every day of His life, and every action of every day, threw a merit, a power, and a glory, upon the Human Nature Which endured death for our sakes; the merit of the perfect Doer of the Will of God; the power of the Conqueror of the evil one; the glory of the Opener of the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Again, we must think of His life-long obedience as possessing a power of sanctification which He imparts to us. We read, "By the which will we are *sanctified*,—not merely *accepted* as holy, but also *made* holy,—through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all." He took our nature upon Him sanctifying it. It was sinful; in Him it was made pure. We see Him, in that Human Nature, conquering the tempter, and fulfilling all

righteousness. It is Man who has conquered. Believers in Christ who have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death, and made partakers of His holiness. From our union with Him by the working of the Holy Spirit a new power is bestowed upon us that we should be holy. In all that man has to do and to suffer He did, and suffered, and conquered. The child, the youth, the man, knows that in Christ his own temptations were endured and overcome, his own age adorned with the holiness of the Son of God. We may tread where our Brother trod, follow His example, and be more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and gave Himself for us.

These quiet thirty years leave us an example, while they assure us of His sympathy. If He had come into the world only to die, where were His obedience? where His fulfilling of the law? where His example? where His sympathy? He knows what temptation is; and more than this, "In that He hath suffered being tempted He is able to succour them that are tempted."^f He will supply exactly that very grace which we need, and at the right time, when our need is sorest, and strength is failing. Every act of His Life, what we know and what we know not, is of infinite value, infinite power. Of infinite value and power with the Father

^f Heb. ii. 18.

as pleasing Him; of infinite value to us as shewing the perfect example; of infinite power for us, and in us, as conquering evil, purifying and strengthening our nature. Are we striving? He has attained. Are we tempted? He also was tempted, and sympathises with us. Are we resisting? So did He, even unto blood, and in life and death He conquered. Are we doubting, fearing, sorrowing? He is willing and able to save to the uttermost. Are we impatiently longing for the final struggle, and the blessed rest from strife? He waited thirty years, subduing even His consuming love for men into a patient waiting until His time should come.

We, Brethren, would gladly yield up our souls if He would ensure to us an immediate entrance into His glory. There are many willing to die for Christ, who cannot live for Him; many whose courage might endure even the Cross, but cannot persevere through the daily temptations of scorn and ridicule, the vexations of the world without, and the flesh within; just as there are many who in the excitement of the battle have courage for one brave dash up to the cannon's mouth, but faint, and grow weary, and lose heart and die, under the long and purposeless delay which must sometimes be a soldier's lot. It is really often more easy to dare and do, than to wait and endure. And

so the Christian soldier is tempted sometimes to be fretful and impatient, to wish that the days of suffering in mind and body, and of enduring temptation, were ended, to sigh for rest. He finds it hard to say, with Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come."^s God, Who is long-suffering and patient with sin, would prove us, as He proved the Captain of our Salvation, by patient obedience. As He waited, so let us wait, meditating upon the scenes and actions of His life; striving so to follow His example and to use His grace that our death may be dear in the sight of the Lord; that we, living holily, may learn daily how to die; that dying we may pass into His hands, to dwell with the souls of the righteous, where neither sorrow nor suffering shall ever come.

^g Job xiv. 14.

SERMON IV.

Lent a Humiliation of Love.

(Preached 1st Sunday in Lent, 1862.)

“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her.”—Genesis xxix. 20.

WHAT does the world say of Lent? Perhaps some of us have already heard voices saying, “Lent again! Lent, with an incessant burden of Church services and additional sermons, in everything suggestive of gloom and painfulness, tyrannically forbidding harmless enjoyments, interfering impertinently in our daily life, laying down restrictions in eating and drinking, and marking for us on every side a limit which we are not to pass! Lent, casting its thick veil before the joys and the glad tidings of the Gospel, preaching the terrors of the law and the imperfect warnings of John the Baptist, instead of the free mercy of Jesus! One would think that the Catho-

lick Church must have gone backward, and have drawn her inspiration from the slavery of the Law, when She tries to impose such a burden upon the souls and bodies of her children. What a good thing that so few people trouble themselves about Lent!"

Is this true for you, Brethren? Do you speak so? I think I can hear other voices saying, "Lent again! Lent, with its calming solemnities of more frequent services, its pleading voice of contrition and humiliation, its never-wearying calls to repentance! Lent, in everything harmonizing with the broken heart and contrite spirit, reminding us at each moment, and in every common action of life, that we are sinners in a sinful world, and inviting our perpetual acknowledgment of unworthiness by wise restraints! Lent, mercifully calling us back, lest, intoxicated with the deep draughts of Christmas joy, our spirits strive to rise too high, and bidding us prepare ourselves by self-examination, repentance, and confession of sin, by mortification and prayers, to know the fellowship of the sufferings as well as of the glories of Jesus, in order that now dying to sin with Him, we may be ever henceforth risen again to newness of life! One would say that the Church, in turn rejoicing with them that do rejoice and weeping with them that weep, must have drawn her inspiration from the very Heart of her loving Lord. For nought

but a divine goodness could have devised so sweet a scheme for winning sinners to their own salvation."

Yes, Brethren, Lent again! for the years are not long in completing their circle. And how does it appear to you? In what tones does it address you? In which of these ways would you describe it? Or do you not care enough about Holy Seasons to have given it a thought? Do you look upon Lent as a burden grievous to be borne, or as His burden which is light? Do you murmur against its invitations to fasting, weeping, and praying, as the relics of an expiring superstition? Do you cast off its observances as the broken shackles of an antiquated slavery? Or have you a thankful heart for its kindly warnings and demands, rejoicing that you are again specially invited to take up your Cross, or to bear one heavier than before, and more like His? Will you enter upon its few weeks of solemn observance, as Jacob entered upon his service when "he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had unto her?"

Self-denial is the Cross of the suffering Jesus, which He offers to every member of His Church. He does not always lay it upon them by compulsion, lest, through their impatience of it, it should lose its blessedness. But He offers it to them that they

may, of their own free will, take it up; and bear it after Him. It is this glad taking up the Cross to bear it after Jesus, it is the hard service made light through love of Him, which least of all things the world can understand. Imperfect knowledge of God deems it unreasonable. Imperfect love holds it superfluous. Indifference sneers at it. To the latter all suffering is evil, all restraint slavery. This spirit cannot comprehend that "there should be no greater comfort to Christian people than to be made like unto Christ by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses."^h Yet these are the words which our Church addresses to the sick, gathering them from the Holy Scriptures. And, if this be admitted as really true, the objection is then made, that God, and not man, must know the exact amount of pain, and mortification, and discipline necessary for each; that He cannot wish us to impose laws, and observances, and restraints upon ourselves, mortifying our bodies by fastings and watchings, our souls by long meditation and prayer. Ah! how easy it is to argue to a pleasant conclusion, to find excuses for every gratification of the flesh and spirit, objections to every demand of extra service, and to every limitation of indulgence! Yet an Apostle deemed it necessary to keep under his body, and bring it

^h Exhortation in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick.

into subjection, lest at any time he should become a castaway. He thinks it good to remind the disciples that he had been "in fastings often," himself setting them an example in self-denial.¹

There are mysteries in God's Providence which, although in their mode of operation past man's finding out, seem to stand as ordained laws in the Divine Mind. Scripture teaches, by word, and by example, what the experience of all mankind confirms, that perfection and suffering are closely connected. Without toil there is no gain. The freedom and regeneration of nations, the rewards of intellectual talent and of military daring, are not to be won without cost. Man eats his bread in the sweat of his brow. Suffering always has been, and always will be, one of God's most effectual instruments in bringing the souls of His beloved unto perfection. Even the Lord Himself, the Captain of our salvation, "though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," and was "made perfect through sufferings."² What are we that we should despise that training which made Him perfect for the victory over our enemies? What are we that we should doubt its efficacy for ourselves? What are we that we should be so unloving as to refuse to weep with Him Who has mourned unto us, as to repudiate

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. xi. 27.

² Hebrews ii. 10; v. 8.

all fellowship with Him, and to count these few days of more serious thought and observance as no better than a galling and unprofitable slavery.

It was not so with Him. He came into the world, serving for three and thirty years to win His Bride, the Church, a second Jacob serving for a better Rachel. He took on Him the form of a servant. Then began a life of suffering, the depth and extent of which mortal mind can never measure either by imagination or experience. He, like Jacob, was a good shepherd, seeking that which was lost until He found it. He might truly take up Jacob's words, and say, "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes."^k No human sorrow, or anxiety, or fear, or pain, which He did not undergo for us, being in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. The story of His earthly life, though four times repeated, covers but a few pages of our Bibles. Day after day it is read in our ears, until it has become so familiar that we scarcely condescend to listen. Yet saints have meditated upon it day and night. For its wonders, like His love of Whom it tells, are inexhaustible. The story of His life indeed is but a part of the story of His love. The life was bounded by years. The Love is an everlasting Love. And that

^k Gen. xxxi. 39.

life was crowned with a three years' ministry, which, begun with forty days of fasting, loneliness, and temptation, was ended with the Passion and the Cross. So much endured for us of His own free sovereign will and choice, gladly and eagerly, for the joy that was set before Him! He loved His Church, and gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church. He saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied. May we not, therefore, adopting the words in which the sacred writer tells of Jacob supported by an earthly love, say of the Lord Jesus, that He served thirty-three years for His Church, and they seemed to Him but a few days for the love He had unto her. Now, in this season of Lent, He calls us to follow in His steps, to bear the Cross after Him, to present, not our souls, only, but our bodies also, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.¹ He invites us to be with Him in His fast of forty days in the wilderness; with Him in His nightly prayers on the bleak hill-side; with Him in His agony in the garden; with Him in His loneliness when all the disciples forsook Him and fled; with Him in His filial sorrow as His eye fell upon His Blessed Mother weeping beneath the Cross; with Him in His thirst, and fever, and cold, in His death-agony, and last expiring cry. And the Bride,

¹ Romans xii. 1.

hearing her Bridegroom's voice, cannot refrain herself, but must go forth to meet Him, bearing His reproach, sharing in His grief. He is an hungered. Shall She fare sumptuously every day, forgetting that they gave Him gall to eat, and that when He was thirsty, they gave Him vinegar to drink? He is stripped of His raiment. It is no time for her to be arranged in vesture wrought about with divers colours. He is dying. Let her for a little while sit as a widow, weeping for His death, and for her own unfaithfulness which slew Him.

It is not difficult to see that Lent must be a burden to many. Perhaps we may say that it must be a burden to all. To some, so heavy a burden that they cast it off entirely. Among these are such as deny the advantage of special seasons for the expression of Christian joy and sorrow; such as refuse to admit the necessity of any fixed time for self-humiliation and repentance; such as cut themselves off from all union with the practice of the early Christians; such as refuse allegiance to the Church's precepts; and such as, giving all their time to the pursuit of wealth or pleasure, grudge to God even one short hour of worship on His holy day.

And here, Brethren, I would say a few words upon our Friday services at this season. I have chosen a subject which concerns us all, the subject of Sin against God. And I

hope to see assembled here a goodly congregation of earnest Christian people glad to devote one hour in the week to worshipping their Saviour, confessing their sins before Him, and learning how to serve Him better. I think that an hour might be devoted to religious duties for love of Christ as easily as to amusement for love of the world. And I think that an additional attendance at Church is just one of those duties of Lent in which the richest and the poorest may unite when the obligations of their home and station prevent them from doing more. If any here present regard Lent as an idle, useless, institution of man's invention, an unprofitable slavery inconsistent with the liberty of the Gospel, a season of Pharisaic observance and of self-trusting righteousness, I will not stay now to argue the point. I pray God that some day the sense of their own sins, and gratitude for their Redeemer's sufferings, may kindle in their hearts the desire to keep rather a perpetual Lent of repentance and self-abasement.

I will now speak of the universal custom in the Church of devoting these forty days to the great work of contrition, and repentance of sin. In the Primitive Church there was, as you have heard in the Commination service, a godly discipline that at the beginning of Lent such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance,

and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord, and that others admonished by their example might be the more afraid to offend.

But the last days have come with their perilous times, with more notorious offenders, and with relaxed discipline. The Church's law, light as it is, is set at nought by men who profess the utmost affection for her rules. Let us at least, for our part, act as dutiful children. Let us enquire what she would have us do, and what her purpose is in enjoining upon us the observance of Lent. And then let us endeavour to do her bidding, and obtain the profit.

Now what is meant by the order that the Forty days of Lent are to be observed as days of fasting or abstinence?

Let us go back some hundred and sixty years, and listen to the words of a godly and pious layman, Robert Nelson, whose Book on the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England is so well known, and so justly esteemed among us. He wrote thus; "The design of the Church in this Order is that these forty days should be set apart as a proper season for mortification, and the exercise of self-denial; to humble and afflict ourselves by frequent fastings, and to punish our too often abuses of God's creatures by abstinence, and by forbearing the lawful enjoyment of them; to form and settle firm pur-

poses of holy obedience; to pray frequently to God, both in private and public, for pardon and His Holy Spirit; to put us in mind of that sore trial and temptation which Christ then endured for our sakes." And although we cannot in these days bear the privations which the primitive Christians loved to practice, yet "every one should spend some part of the time in fasting; more in abstinence, according to the circumstances of his health and outward condition in the world, and this with a design to deny and punish himself, and to express his humiliation before God for his past transgressions. The ornament of attire may be laid aside as improper to express the sense of mourners; and the frequency of paying and receiving visits may be interrupted as unseasonable when our minds are oppressed with sorrow. Public assemblies for pleasure and diversion should be avoided as enemies to that seriousness we now profess. Our retirements should be filled with reading pious discourses, and with frequent prayer, and with examining the state of our consciences. The public devotion should be constantly attended. We should be liberal in our alms, and very ready to employ ourselves in all opportunities of relieving either the temporal or spiritual wants of our neighbours. And we should frequently exercise ourselves in the meditation of divine subjects, the best means to

make all discourses from the press, and from the pulpit, effectual to our salvation."

If these rules for the observance of Lent were good a hundred and fifty years ago in almost the coldest and most unloving age since the first preaching of the Gospel, they can hardly be complained of as too strict for the present time, when on every side religious declaimers are crying aloud, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord."

By obedience, cheerful obedience, to these precepts we may not doubt but that we shall do acceptable service to God, and of His bountiful mercy receive good to our souls.

(1). By so doing we declare our belief in the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints, that whatsoever she has commanded everywhere, always, and among all men, comes to us with His authority Who promises to be with His Church even unto the end of the world. We declare our belief that He is present among us, teaching and ordering with an authority which no lapse of time, no perversity or lawlessness of man, can set aside.

(2). Our obedience is an acceptable service to Him as being obedience to His will, as we understand it from His Word, and the custom of the Churches of God.

(3). Our obedience is an acceptable service to Him as being an act of love and sympathy towards the suffering Saviour, fill-

ing up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church.^m

(4.) Our obedience is an acceptable service to Him as an intercessory act of contrition, which, being offered by us, as St. Paul offered his sufferings in the verses just quoted, may be accepted with Him, through Jesus Christ, for ourselves, and for His Church, and find mercy, as the humiliation of Job for his children, and the fasting and mourning of the people of Nineveh for themselves, found mercy from God.

It seems very strange that a practice sanctioned by our Lord Himself, and spoken of by Him as a regular part of holy exercises and Christian training, and as a means of casting out the evil spirit,ⁿ should be so frequently misunderstood, and objected to. In the hope of clearing away some of these objections and misunderstandings I will say a few words on the disposition of heart which is required to render fasting and all self-denial acceptable to God, and profitable to the soul. Perhaps they may not be without their use to those who desire to serve God in this manner.

In Ash-Wednesday's Gospel our Lord teaches you, "When ye fast be not as the hypocrites." It is not then the mere abstaining from meat and drink which is acceptable

^m Coloss. i. 24.

ⁿ St. Matthew vi. 16—18; xvii. 21.

in His sight. The superstitious abstinence of Eastern fanatics, and the cruel tortures which they inflict upon themselves, are not the fast which God hath chosen. The fasting of the Pharisees for the sake of the praise of men was an offence to Him. The fasting of Christians when every desire except that of the bodily appetite is freely gratified, when the heart never turns to the thought of its sins, to the sufferings of Christ, or to the needs of Christ's poor, is equally unprofitable and displeasing.

The dispositions which alone make self-denial pleasing before God are humility and love. Never more than at this season do we need to pray with David, Make me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. The loving and penitent soul has already looked through the seven weeks of Lent, and has seen the Cross raised up on Calvary. It says, "My sins have caused that. It is really my work." Therefore it delights to hear the call to repentance. Therefore it is ready to walk softly in the bitterness of its heart. Therefore it looks within itself, and gathers together its secret and its open sins, its thoughtless and its presumptuous sins, its obstinacies and rebellions, its coldness and faintheartedness, its ignorances and negligencies, its distrust and unlovingness. Then it compares them with the grace and love showered down without measure from above.

It has its sin ever before it. And it is *glad* to have its sin ever before it, praying daily, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Therefore, Brethren, if you would keep Lent aright, repent, and carry your penitence into every part of your being where sin has entered, or may enter. Mortify your inclinations, your passions, your evil habits. Mortify the quick temper. Abstain from the angry and uncharitable word. Quell the rebellious thought. Trample under foot the hatred which wishes evil to another, the vanity which puffs you up, and the pride which dishonours a brother. Resolve that this Lent shall see some besetting sin conquered, so that by God's grace you may kneel at your Easter Communion more humble, more penitent, more sympathising with the distresses, more charitable to the errors, of your fellow Christians. Carry your penitence into every part. Every member must be brought into subjection to the law of Christ; and this is a law for all seasons as well as for Lent. Think how many sins have entered into the soul through the eyes. With the eyes you may fast by turning them away lest they behold vanity, and cause you to sin.^o With the ear you may fast by refusing to listen to unkind and wicked words. With the tongue you may fast by keeping silence from such words. With the mind you may

^o Psalm cxix. 37.

fast by driving away every remembrance and every imagination which might bring you to take pleasure in the thought of sin.

And on the other hand you may fast with eye, and ear, and lip, and memory, and every sense and power of mind, by supplying the room of banished sin with positive good. The eye may feed the soul by contemplation of the works of God, or by holy reading. The ear may hearken to the word of God. The tongue may speak to Him in prayer and praise. The memory may feed upon His Almighty love. Consider too that whatever you deny yourselves you may give to Christ's poor. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked that thou cover him?"^p To such a fast He who seeth in secret will openly give a rich reward. In the sick, the hungry, the naked, the ignorant, the Saviour is present, hoping to receive that He may pay you back an hundred fold.

This is Lent, Brethren; a season of repentance; a season of loving service; a season of taking up the Cross, and following after the Lord. If you are weary and heavy

laden, if you grieve that your sins have crucified Him once, if you wish to make Him any offering now, the best you can, although little one, come and keep Lent in this way. Your God served so many years for you, and they seemed to Him but a few days for the love He had unto you. Come now, in your turn, and serve for a few days for the love you have unto Him. If your love is anything like His Lent will be a burden which is no burden. His love is wonderful. Perhaps He may in His own time choose to make you partaker in the deepest of His sorrows. Perhaps He will give you to drink of that bitter cup of which He drank. Perhaps He may, before the end of life, lay so much upon you, that you may in the sufferings of flesh and spirit seem to be hanging on the right hand of His Cross on Calvary. What matter? You will hear Him saying at the end, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And when the Lent of this life shall be over, after the brief rest in the tomb and the calm joy of Paradise, there shall break forth the dawning of that Easter morn, when the Church, His Bride, and each soul for whom He served, and whom He has espoused to Himself, shall feel the everlasting arms of the Heavenly Bridegroom thrown around her, and for ever; and the Blessed ones shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

SERMON V.

The Loneliness of Jesus.

(Preached in Holy Week, 1863.)

"I am full of heaviness; I looked for some to have pity upon me, but there was no man; neither found I any to comfort me."—Psalm lxi. 21.

THE writer of these words knew what it was to suffer in mind as well as in body, to sink under the dreary sense of loneliness as well as under the sharpness of bodily agony. But God did not leave him comfortless for long. We find him presently rejoicing in tribulation, then thanking God for support and deliverance. "It is good for me," he writes, "that I have been in trouble." "In the multitude of the sorrows which I had in my heart, (and they were very many,) Thy comforts have refreshed my soul."^a So God deals with all His people, as the God of all comfort, of patience and consolation.

^a Psalm cxix. 71; xciv. 19.

In all affliction kind words, kind ministrations, the assurances of brighter hours in the future, bring much of comfort. Still there are times when we cannot listen to words either of consolation, or encouragement, when the cheerfulness of those about us is rather irritating than comforting, when we are provoked into thinking, if indeed we refrain from saying, "You speak as if all trouble was light, and speedily ended. But, after all, what do you know of sorrow, such sorrow as my sorrow?"

What we want at such times is sympathy, the silent assurance conveyed by the kind eye or the gentle clasp of the hand that we are understood, such sympathy as Job's friends shewed him at the first when they came to mourn with him, and to comfort him. "They sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great."^r

Now this is the consolation above all other which we possess in all our sorrows, the remembrance that the Lord Jesus has suffered in like manner, and the assurance that He sympathises with us. In all our afflictions He was afflicted. He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* This thought cannot fail to render our burden lighter. It brings with it something even more comfort-

^r Job ii. 13.

* Isaiah lxi. 9; liii. 4.

ing than the assurance of mercy. We rejoice of course,—how should we not?—in knowing that our God is a loving God, a merciful God, that He chastises only to draw us nearer to Himself. And we dare to trust ourselves unreservedly, body and soul, into His hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour. But more than this has He done in pity to our infirmities. He Who created has also suffered. Is it pain of body under which we groan? We behold our Lord's adorable Body torn with the scourges, His Head and Hands and Feet pierced with the thorns and with the nails. Is it anguish of mind which distresses us? We hear His bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." Whatever we suffer He has experienced. That glorified Body and Soul, wherein dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, having suffered knows our grief, and sympathises with us, being touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In His Incarnation, in the Man Christ Jesus, our weaknesses find a home, sheltering themselves in His strength. He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

But in this one point, Brethren, He is unlike us, that, suffering, He received neither help, nor consolation, nor sympathy. He looked for some to have pity upon Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to

† Psalm xxiii. 1; St. Matthew xxvii. 46.

comfort Him. He was alone. Let this be the subject of our meditation to-day, the loneliness of Jesus under His load of bodily and mental sorrows.

He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. What did He receive in return? What share had the tender, loving, heart of Jesus in the sympathy of hearts beating in harmony, and desiring only what He desired. What share had He in the sympathy of minds searching out with His human mind the deep things of experience, 'penetrating with His into the mysteries of created things? His joy was unknown to others, a secret spring of deepest waters. Once only do we read that "Jesus rejoiced in spirit."^a His knowledge was far above the scope of His disciples' minds. And His sorrow,—how far was "even the tenderest heart and next His own" from penetrating its depths! He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. When trouble was hard upon Him there was none to help Him. He looked for some to have pity upon Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

The life of Jesus upon earth was a life of loneliness so far as regards earthly friendship and communion. His life was, of neces-

^a St. Luke x. 21.

sity, a life apart. In one sense He was not alone, because the Father was with Him. But His human heart must have longed for human sympathy. He could love. He could bless. He could restore the dead to the childless and widowed mother, the sick to the anguished and beseeching father. He could weep with those that wept over Lazarus' grave. He could pass through, doing good, scattering joy and gladness everywhere. He could receive thanks, adoration, love. And yet He was *alone*. His tender infancy, even as He lay in the bosom of His Blessed Virgin Mother, was lighted with a consciousness of things too high to be shared by her. He must cause her and His foster-father Joseph three days anxious search. Yet He cannot comfort her, or tell her more than is implied in the question, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"^v He must begin His ministry wondrously, and mysteriously. And she was only to know that henceforth a barrier was raised between them, and was to seek Him only to find that their loving home at Nazareth was broken up for ever. A mother's love was not to solace His grief. The Holy Baptist is beheaded. "And when Jesus heard of it, He departed by ship into a desert place apart."^w Again, His spirit seeks relief in prayer, and "He went up into a mountain apart to pray; and

^v St. Luke ii. 41—42.^w St. Matt. xiv. 13.

when the evening was come He was there alone."^x He foreknew long since of His decease which He must accomplish at Jerusalem, that bitter cup which the human weakness would fain, if it were possible, see removed from His lips. In His glory on the Holy Mount He may speak of it with Moses and Elias. But when He commences to open the dark future to His disciples how are His words received? St. Peter's intrusive zeal cannot enter into his Master's loving apprehensions. "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee," is the hasty rejoinder of one who, acknowledging the glory of the Christ, had never yet felt the burden of the Cross.^y As the last year of His ministry is drawing to its close, He tells the disciples that He has a Baptism to be baptized with, and that He is straitened until it be accomplished. In connection with this He adds, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death." His heart is full of heaviness. He foretells His coming agony and disgrace. He puts it all before them, the delivery into the hands of the Gentiles, the mocking and the cruel insults, the spitting, the scourging, the malefactor's death followed by the resurrection. Even then, no word of sympathy, not one, falls from the lips of

^x St. Matthew xiv. 23.

^y St. Matthew xx. 17-23.

those He loves so well. They understood none of these sayings. And immediately James and John through their mother prefer their ambitious request that they may sit the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom. They were dreaming of earthly greatness, while He was speaking of a crown of thorns, a reed for His sceptre, and the Cross for His throne. Then as the evening of His betrayal saw Him leave the Paschal supper for the mount of Olivet, He seems, as it were, to cling by bodily nearness to those from whom He was, nevertheless, so far separated in mind. He leads all the disciples into the Garden of Gethsemane. There He bids them rest, taking with Him a little farther the three best beloved. Their nearness in body seems to sustain and solace Him. But they may not be with Him to share His sorrows, or to unite with Him in prayer. His soul, exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, may not impart any of its bitterness to them. They may watch near Him; may pray, for themselves, that they enter not into temptation, and for Him, that the Father, with Whom He is ever One, may support, and comfort Him. Then He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed. Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly. And then, coming back, He findeth them asleep. Not only in strength, but in weakness, He

and they were apart. "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" The knowledge of their doing so would have cheered, would have sustained Him. And He perceives they have sunk under their distress. and His heart has found in them not only separation, but desertion.

But now they are awake again. He had sadly forewarned them of the betrayal by Judas, and of their general cowardice and desertion; "Behold the hour cometh, yea; is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to His own; and ye shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me!"* Ye shall leave Me alone! His human spirit feels not only their sin. but their ingratitude, and His own loneliness and dejection. He saw it all beforehand. Then, at last, as soon as He has been betrayed by one of them, all the others forsook Him, and fled. One, indeed, follows afar off, ventures to obtain admittance into the palace of the High Priest, sees his Master struck and insulted, hears the sentence of death pronounced upon Him by the Jewish council, and then, heedless of the warning, with oaths and curses declares that he knows not the man. Through that long night of mockery and scorn, of hate and cruelty, the Lord Jesus looked for some to have pity upon Him; but there was no man. No man

* St. John xvi. 32.

in the Jewish council to speak in His behalf; no man in that crowded hall to plead for Him, or to do Him a kindness. Every face wore the bitter scowl of hatred, derision, and contempt; and Jesus was alone.

And, though in the last and bitterest hours of His passion His blessed Mother and the beloved disciple stood together beneath the Cross, though many others stood afar off, weeping and wondering, their presence was rather outward companionship than inward consolation, sympathy, and fellowship. The Blessed Virgin Mother had been forewarned of the sword which was piercing through her soul. The disciples and holy women had learned to look that He should redeem Israel, and that He should go away from them. But it was not until after the resurrection that they understood the awfulness of the conflict, and the greatness of the victory, endured and won upon the Cross. The prophetic writing had declared truly of Him, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me."^a No heart, save that of Jesus, knew the terrors of that hour, the bodily torture, the mental anguish, more and more sharp, until His utter loneliness wrung from Him in His weakness and desolation the agonizing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

15. Such was His loneliness in the expecta-

^a Isaiah lxiii. 3.

tion, and under the actual experience of pain. But (as I said before) the same loneliness from the first threw its dark shadow upon His whole life, upon each one of those thirty three years in which He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was no less perfect man than perfect God. The Divine Nature did not spare Him one pang, one throb, one sigh, to which His human nature was subject. He wept at the grave of Lazarus. He wept over Jerusalem, and the house left desolate. On the walk to Calvary, He, bearing His cross, had the word of pity for the weeping daughters of Jerusalem. Yet His words, His teaching, His prayers, declare the difference existing between the Son of Mary, and the children of other mothers, a difference of knowledge, of thought, of purpose, which left Him alone. Does He tell of His ascension? It is, not *our* Father, but "*My* Father and *your* Father, *My* God, and *your* God." Does He speak of hopes and fears? It is for those whom He leaves upon earth, the Saviour for the beloved and redeemed, the Greater for the less. All that He feels and knows is above them. Like the glorious sun His heart sheds light and warmth into every heart, a light and warmth reflected again and again; and He is present among them, but far, far above them. Their little joy and sorrow is a tribute to Him, an imitation, and

the effect of His; but it cannot know His vastness. His inward life is union with His Father. When He speaks of Himself it is as united with His Father in will, and purpose, and desire. "I and My Father are One." "Ye shall leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." "All things that the Father hath are Mine."^c These are the words of the Man, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary. We hear the human voice, broken by the emotions of sorrow and of an awful desire for the completion of the work of redemption. But into the fulness of meaning contained in these expressions we cannot, dare not, seek to penetrate. When the Son of God speaks of His Sonship and its prerogatives, of the ineffable Communion and Unity maintained by the Eternal Father and the Co-eternal Son, of the everlasting purposes and the hidden counsels of heaven, we can only whisper, awe-struck and terrified, "What manner of man is this?" And if *we* feel thus, with the fulness of the Church's teaching lighting up the mysteries of the Godhead, we know surely that the Apostles, before the coming of the Holy Ghost, could not have understood these things; and that if their affection prompted an answer, they would, in ignorant and unseemly sympathy,

^c St. John x. 30; xvi. 32; xvi. 13.

have cried with Peter, "That be far from Thee, Lord."

Consider, further the loneliness of Jesus in His estimate and knowledge of earthly things. He, by Whom all things were made, knowing the laws by which the material creation is ruled and sustained by Himself, draws for the disciples from the simplest of natural objects lessons of faith and of contentment. He could discern for them the face of the sky. He could remind His hearers that heaven and earth should pass away. Wondrous thoughts must have passed through His mind as He spoke of things visible and known to them. And yet ten thousand marvels of Almighty Power and Almighty Love were bound in every one of those natural objects which He knew from eternity, and which their finite experience could not receive. And passing from the things of this world to the things of eternity, we see Him again even more alone. He, in Whom the Spirit dwelt, One with the Father and the Spirit, was alone on earth in the knowledge of God. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Father but the Son." "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."^d The everlasting purposes, the Will, the Love, the

^d St. Matt. xi. 27; St. John i. 18.

Nature of the Godhead, were known to Him Who walked on the earth as the Son of Man. Yet He could not share this knowledge with another. The disciples might learn a portion. They might receive; but they could not repay.

Again, He alone could know what sin is. It was for Him first to explain the spiritual meaning and intention of the law, love to God and man. He understood the character of sin not only by His divine knowledge, but by anticipation of the Cross. There He beheld Himself, God dying for sin, and yet God slain by sin. Like the crime of the fallen angels so is all sin, rebellion against God, desire to destroy God. He could see from the first offence of Adam sin propagating itself in millions upon millions of human hearts, each one sinning million upon million sins, each one spoiled, marred—and of the whole how vast a number lost for ever. “For God (says Bishop Pearson) laid on Him the iniquities of us all. And as we are obliged to be sorry for our particular sins so was He grieved for the sins of us all. If then we consider the perfection and latitude of His knowledge, He understood all the sins of men for which He suffered, all the evil and guilt, all the offence against the Majesty, and ingratitude against the Goodness, of God which was contained in those sins.”

Once more ; He alone knew the awfulness of eternal punishment, and therefore the true value of a human soul. So much lost which mortal knowledge cannot fathom, an eternity of happiness ! So much received in exchange for a soul, an eternity of misery ! How He must have grieved in His loving spirit as men turned away and would not be saved ! How He must have mourned as looking into the far depths of the future He saw the souls which He had created, and for which He was about to die, turning away because they would not have life, and choosing never-ending destruction ! No human heart could feel this grief as He felt it, or share it with Him. No human heart could look, and long, and mourn, over the departing sinner, as the heart of Jesus did.

In all He was alone. Earthly relationship could not share with Him. Earthly friendship deserted Him. Earthly knowledge was overwhelmed before Him. Earthly purity was shamed. Earthly hearts could never love as He loved friends and enemies. Earthly zeal fainted at His side. Earthly endurance failed. In the battle He was alone. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. In affliction He was alone. He looked for some to have pity on Him but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

God be thanked, though our Saviour was

lonely, though He found none to comfort Him, He has left us neither lonely nor comfortless. Though we cannot suffer with Him He is suffering for us, and with us. His sufferings, and so His loneliness, have won salvation for us. In His loneliness we find comfort. When we are oppressed with the weight and burden of our sin, when accusing thoughts bring us into His presence and we bow down before Him hiding our faces in the dust, will He not disperse them as He did the accusers of the woman taken in adultery? And we shall lift up our eyes when He speaks, to see Jesus left alone, and to hear the gracious words of absolution, "Go, and sin no more."

Surely, in the many hours when our loneliness presses us down, Jesus, alone, deserted, and unpitied, will come and pity us. Loneliness will come. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. We may be most alone when most with others. Sometimes we dare not, sometimes we cannot, speak, to share, even with those best beloved, our joys and our sorrows. Words will not express what we feel, and desire to communicate. We cannot frame a case so as to obtain the comfort, the advice we need.

Or those whom we love best leave us to walk alone. They know our sorrow, our desire to serve God, and they throw stumbling blocks in our way; or they cannot un-

derstand us; or they leave us to ourselves, when we are trying to bring them nearer to Christ. The heavenward path is a trying one to tread alone. But we see by the foot-marks that Jesus was alone throughout the whole way of the Cross.

One lonely hour, one lonely journey, must come to us all, the hour of death, the journey through the dark valley. All alone we die. Yet He Who was most alone of all promised to one believing soul that he should be with Him that night in Paradise. For us, likewise, our lonely hour when earthly friends are shut out from us will, if we are found in Jesus, be blessed by angelic ministrations and companionship of the Crucified and Living Lord, the Good Shepherd, with His guiding hand, His rod and staff to comfort us. As His Death is our life, so His Loneliness is surely an eternal presence with us.

Let us meditate upon the Loneliness of Jesus as one of the chief among the mysteries of His Passion. Let us draw comfort from it, and with comfort the blessed assurance that however lonely we may be He Who will not leave us comfortless will Himself come to us; that He will say to us, as we kneel in penitence before Him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace;" or perhaps speak to us as He did to the weeping Mary in the garden, giving us not

only enduring consolation for ourselves, but bidding us, moreover, take His disciples word that they may know where to find Him, and remain with Him for ever.

SERMON VI.

The Indwelling Spirit.

(Preached Whit Sunday, 1860.)

“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.”—1 St. John iv. 13.

TO-DAY, Brethren, one of the greatest doctrines of the Christian Faith is put so prominently before our thoughts that to speak from the pulpit on any other subject would spoil the harmony of our services. We have strong reason for thankfulness that our Church services are so arranged as to bring each vital truth in turn before our minds, and that we are thus prevented from forgetting any, and from dwelling upon one to the exclusion of the rest. All one-sided views are mistaken in art, science, politics, commerce, what you will. One-sided views in religion are positively dangerous. For example; if men thought only of God's holiness and justice, forgetting His mercy, they would soon

despair of salvation. If they thought only of His mercy, forgetting His holiness, they would soon cease to fear sin. Only in proportion as we attain to the *whole* truth is our religious knowledge safe and blessed. And in order to know God as He is, we must be taught by His Spirit, Whom the Lord Jesus calls the Spirit of truth, the Spirit Who should lead the disciples into all the truth. To-day God's Holy Word, written under the inspiration of that same Spirit, has been read in our ears, telling us of His coming upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. In our Collect we have prayed for a right judgment in all things, for light, and counsel, and strength. And our whole service to-day plainly teaches us that Christian belief and Christian practice are so united one with the other that we cannot obey God's commandments and please Him unless we believe what He has revealed; and, again, that we cannot call any faith a saving faith unless it work by love, and bring forth good fruit.

We must believe, and we must obey. See how much the great mystery of this day has to do with our faith and obedience. The knowledge of heavenly things is imparted to the world by the Holy Ghost, by Whom also is given the grace to believe, the will and power to obey. The disciples, having been instructed by their Master during the space of three years, were commanded by Him to

tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. As soon as the Holy Spirit fell upon them in shape of the fiery tongues the authority to preach the Word was given. St. Peter stood up to invite those very men who had crucified the Lord of Glory to repentance and belief in His Name. That same Spirit Who inspired his words opened the hearts of the wondering and attentive multitude. Three thousand souls were that same day baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus. Unless that same precious Gift be shed forth upon the Church now none of the means used for bringing sinful men to repentance and faith can be effectual. Unless He bless the spoken word that word will return unto the preacher void. Unless He open the heart there can be no glad receiving of the Word, no living faith, no springing up of the seed sown therein. Unless He water the growing plant with the dew of His grace, and make the beams of the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon it, no good fruit can be brought to perfection. We need, both for faith and for obedience, the grace of the Holy Spirit of God, that various supernatural working by which we are new-born in Baptism, by which, if we fall from the innocency of our Baptismal State, we are recalled and converted, by which we are daily renewed, supported, and refreshed, enabled to tread Satan under our

feet, and to subdue our own corrupt will, by which we receive strength to live a godly, righteous, and sober life to the glory of God's Holy Name. Is any one among us living a life alienated from the grace of God? It is because he is resisting the calls and influences of that Blessed Spirit. Is any one daily more and more conformed to the image of God's dear Son? It is because He is obedient to the voice of the Spirit, and submits to be formed and moulded by the Hand which is changing him from glory to glory. We can do nothing good and well pleasing to God without the grace of His Spirit preventing and assisting us. With it we can do all things, conquer all temptations, go on unto all perfection. If we fail, and come short of the glory of God, the fault is in our own imperfect and irresolute will, and in our misuse of the grace already given. We believe that God, Who will have all men to be saved, gives something of this grace to every child of man. We cannot understand in all cases how He works, as with the heathen, for instance, who never heard the Blessed Name of Jesus. We know only that the Great Judge of all will deal with them according to their light and the relics of His Truth yet existing among them.* But this we may unhesitatingly believe, that when the good tidings of the gospel declaring salvation by the

* Rom. ii. 14.

Death of the Son of God have sounded in the hearing of any one, whether he be living in a Christian or a heathen country, whether he be baptized or unbaptized, these tidings are God's offer of mercy to his soul, and are accompanied with grace for its acceptance. Whether this offer be brought before the heart by the voice of the Lord's servant, or by the letters of the printed book, it is the call of the Holy Spirit. There is but one impediment to His entrance and His indwelling, and that is the sullen, obstinate, resistance of the hard heart.

It is evident, then, that the work of the Holy Spirit is a work of mercy, and of mercy towards *all* men, having for its object their present, and eternal, salvation. It is evident, too, that men are dependent upon the Spirit, as they are upon the Father and the Son, for their eternal life. This being so, ought we not to be unfeignedly thankful for the knowledge, and the possession, of the promises, that God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; that His Word will effectually work in them that believe it; that every desire for His grace has been planted in our hearts by that same Spirit in order to bring us to prayer, that He may be entreated, and prevailed upon, to give freely.

Indeed, we ought to be thankful in the mere knowledge that there is such a good and loving Spirit. How much greater our

cause for thankfulness in the assurances that the Spirit has been *given to us* to testify of the Father and of the Son, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that the Apostles were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and with power not only to preach the Word but also to confirm it by wonderful works; that the Prophets and Evangelists wrote under His direction the story of divine love in Christ Jesus; that other faithful men were in turn entrusted with these precious truths; and that He has established for us His Church to be the pillar and ground of the truth.^f All this the Spirit has done to bring us unto Christ; all this to teach us, to win us, to give us full assurance of faith, joy and peace in believing.

Great as these blessings are they form but a portion of God's good gifts to mankind. All these are external to us, outside, above us. And our hearts want something as a present possession, an earnest of our inheritance, a seal of our adoption,^g something within to rest upon and to love. They want something apart from the expectation of future reward, which will satisfy the desire of fellowship and affection. They want a voice to speak to them in moments of doubt and fear, a power which shall, in dark moments, open the veil and let them see God. This, too, is ours in Christ. There is more

^f 1 Tim. iii. 15.

^g Ephes. i. 13, 14.

of meaning than at first appears in St. Paul's farewell to the Corinthians, with which we end our morning and evening prayer: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."^h Does God then dwell with men? Yes. "Truly our fellowship is—not only with the Holy Ghost, but—with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit"ⁱ

This was the promise of the Father, this was the purpose of the Saviour's word, "It is expedient for you that I go away." This was why He prayed the Father to send another Comforter Who should abide with them for ever, adding the assurance, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."^j

Most precious promise! Most loving prayer! Most blessed assurance! We have not to look far for proof of their fulfilment. The Day of Pentecost, the first Whitsuntide of the Christian Church, saw that Blessed Spirit, that other Comforter, poured out upon the disciples. The conversion of three thousand souls of every nation under heaven, at the preaching of these men, is sufficient evidence that the Almighty Lord was speaking

^h 2 Cor. xiii. 14. ⁱ 1 St. John i. 3; iv. 13. ^j St. John xiv. 18, 20.

by the disciples of Jesus. What gave St. Peter this boldness, this conviction not only of the truth of his message, but also of its success? Was it not the sense of the indwelling of the Father, and of the Son, of which the Spirit was the earnest? The Apostles knew that they dwelt in God, and God in them, because He had given them of His Spirit. So they went forth, empowered and emboldened, to convert the world. So they went forth preaching everywhere, the Lord confirming the Word with signs following, and were content to lay down their lives for the Lord Jesus. And what they believed they taught by word and letters. Among the many verses which may be quoted, let us take one or two out of the eighth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."^k The same evidence, then, that they received, we know on their authority that we possess likewise, even the evidence of the Spirit, not only testifying outside of us that God, and Christ, and Himself, are three Persons in One God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of men, but testifying also within us that

^k Romans viii. 15, 16.

God has given us of that Spirit, that God dwells in us, and we in God.

Our Catechism teaches us that in our Baptism we were made members of Christ, and children of God. At the Baptism of our children we pray God to give His Holy Spirit to these children that they may be born again, according to the promise that He will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. For these expressions and prayers and assurances we have the authority of Scripture. St. Paul makes this doctrine the foundation of His warnings against sin, as St. John makes it the ground of His consolations. "Know ye not," writes the former, "that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" What agreement hath the Temple of God with idols? For ye are the Temple of God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.¹ Such is the position of the baptized towards God. They have no unfulfilled promises, but the very possession of grace, and the indwelling of the Spirit, and so of the Father, and of the Son. We know this. We are bound to reflect upon it as a marvellously high and awful condition. The Almighty Son of God humbled Himself that we might be exalted; exalted not hereafter only, but now, in this life, as partakers of the Divine Nature so soon as, being baptized into Christ,

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16.

we have put on Christ. But as yet glory and exaltation do not involve certainty. We may have preserved the grace of Baptism until yesterday, and to-day have lost it. We may have been once, or ten times, or ten thousand times fallen, and now, converted. And yet we may be to-morrow castaway. God's assurances are for present comfort and encouragement, but not for rest or presumption. Be not high-minded, but fear.

This comfort and assurance for the present is justified only so far as we have the witness of the Spirit in our hearts. What then, if we have done despite unto the Spirit of grace, if we have resisted the Spirit, and quenched the Spirit? It will not profit us to plead what God has done for us, or what we have done for God, in times past. As the hour of death finds us, so shall we appear at the day of judgment. As we are now so perhaps shall we be at the hour of death. It concerns us, therefore, to know whether we have the Spirit which He has given still dwelling in our hearts. And what is the witness of the Spirit?

Here is one rule very clearly laid down for our guidance, that the Spirit is never unfruitful. Wherever He dwells there are always to be found the good fruits by which He witnesses to His presence. As we judge of a tree so are we taught to judge of the heart. And these are the fruits of the Spirit; Love,

joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law."^m Trifling virtues, as some might judge. Let us ask ourselves how many of them are to be seen in our lives, how many days we pass without offending that Blessed Spirit.

Another testimony which we may trust is that of a good conscience, "that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God we have our conversation in the world."ⁿ This is very different from mere feeling. Conscience may, we know, be seared and hardened. But, commonly, with all who are sincerely trying to serve the Lord conscience when dealt with honestly is a safe guide. Take the ten commandments as explained by our Lord Himself in their application to the desire and the will. Let the soul bear witness against herself, and let conscience pronounce the condemnation or acquittal. Until we have done this our feelings are not to be trusted. Even then they are not always infallible in their judgment.

Again, if we have the Spirit of God still dwelling in us we are able, and glad, to receive the things of God, which the natural man cannot receive, because they are spiritually discerned.^o The blessings which Jesus pronounced upon meekness, poverty, sorrow,

^m Gal. v. 22, 23.

ⁿ 2 Cor. i. 12.

^o 1 Cor. ii. 14.

gentleness, purity of heart, were incomprehensible to the Jews, and Gentiles alike, foolishness to the latter, a stumbling-block to the former. They are no less incomprehensible to many Christians now. We profess to believe them. But our life too often gives the lie to our profession. It rejects the hard sayings of Revelation. It takes the low standard of the world instead of the high standard of God. But when the heart is really illuminated by the indwelling Spirit of God it perceives at once how God's law extends to the secret motives, affections, and desires. Conscience is quickened. And thus sins which once were passed over as of no account, are daily mourned over, watched against, and corrected. The understanding comprehends more clearly the character of God, His love and His mercy, His purity and hatred of sin; daily feels deeper humiliation for its manifold offences, deeper longings to be transformed into His image.

Well for us, if we can feel and act thus; if the sense of imperfection brings sorrow for sin and desire for holiness. These cannot exist except where the Spirit of the Lord is. And these lead the Christian into that service which is perfect freedom. One other test therefore is found in the answer to the following questions: "Do we feel the service of God to be liberty, or slavery? Do we groan being burdened with sin? Or, do we

groan complaining that His commandments are grievous?" If we are loving sin we cannot have the Father and the Son dwelling in us. It is impossible. The sense of their continual presence in the heart of the wilful, obstinate, sinner would be intolerable.

But if—which we may surely hope for some, which we must ask for ourselves and for all,—if we dwell in Him, and He in us, what are the blessings resulting therefrom?

Pardon of sin, no doubt. For the believer who thus dwells in Christ, and is thus united to Christ, is made partaker of Christ, and in Christ all things are ours. He is made partaker of all that Christ has wrought for the world, of that full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction made upon the Cross.

Regeneration is another of these blessings. For if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. This great baptismal gift is day by day renewed and perfected by the Holy Ghost. The new nature in bearing good fruit exhibits its characteristics by its resemblance to Christ, loving what He loves, hating what He hates. So, together with regeneration, are found justification and sanctification, freedom from the guilt and penalty of sin, freedom from the power of sin, freedom from the love of sin; "for they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."^p

a This freedom is in itself a blessing for the present and the future life, resulting from our admission among God's children, and our possession of His Holy Spirit. But our text speaks of the knowledge enjoyed by God's children that they are in this state of salvation. As St. Paul writes, "The Spirit **itself** beareth witness with our spirit that we **are** the children of God."^a Let us not mis-
this for the irrevocable assurance of final sal-
vation. Of that St. Paul himself refrained
from speaking too confidently. He calls
upon us to work out our own salvation with
fear and trembling. But this witness of the
Spirit in our hearts does, and must, assure
us of our Heavenly Father's favour and good-
ness to us. It tells us of all His promises,
assuring us that they are the promises of a
Father towards His children; that He has
brought us into a state of salvation; that,
unless of our own traitorous will we depart
from Him, He will stablish the thing which
He has wrought in us. It assures us that
Christ died for all that all should live unto
God; that He is giving us all things needful
for our soul's life here, for our endless life in
the world to come.

And if we should fall away. Yes, if we
have fallen, the Spirit which He has given
us still strives long, witnessing that we are
sons of God, prodigal sons it may be, and in

^a Rom. viii. 16.

a far country, but not less His sons. It witnesses that He is waiting with attentive ear for the first words of repentance and return, bidding us cry, "Abba, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son."^{*}

This hope of acceptance for the returning, this assurance of favour for the abiding, is the Spirit's message to the whole Church, and to every single soul. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Shall we not accept the invitation, and daily draw nearer to our God and Saviour, that we may have to drink of the Water of Life freely, and receive of His fulness for time, and for eternity?

^{*} St. Luke xv. 18.

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SERMON VII.

The Words of Jesus.

(Preached November 15th, 1863.)

“Never man spake like this man.”—St. John vii. 46.

THE testimony of an unwilling witness is always valuable. When a man is found contradicting his previous opinions long held, and strongly expressed, and this in the teeth of his own interests and to the hurt and offence of his friends, there is every reason to give him credit for speaking in good faith. Still more so if his evidence be given unwillingly and in spite of himself, wrung from him by the perseverance of his questioners, or by some sudden and unexpected shock. Moreover, if we know that this unwilling witness has had new facts submitted to his notice with full opportunities for their investigation, we may then most reasonably suppose that he is in every respect to be re-

lied upon, as well on the score of knowledge, as of honesty. We may trust him as able to form a sound judgment, and as truthful in his representation of that which has taken place before his eyes. Now this is precisely what occurred again and again in our Lord's ministry. His bitterest enemies, men and devils, bore the strongest testimony in His favour. Some treacherously, so that we scarcely distinguish how far they really held to their words; as when the Scribes and Pharisees came to Him saying, "Master, we know that Thou art true, and speakest the way of God in truth;"* but others, in the rage of vexed and baffled malice; as the devils, who, in the persons of the possessed, meeting Him, cried out, "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."† The instance recorded in this chapter is not less remarkable than any. The officers of the Chief Priests and Pharisees had been commissioned to apprehend our Blessed Lord. He had already said and done many things which rendered Him obnoxious to the rulers. At the very commencement of His public life He had appeared in the Temple, and arming Himself with a scourge of small cords, (a useless weapon in itself when employed against a multitude of angry men,) He had driven the buyers and sellers out of the sacred courts with these remarkable words,

* St. Matt. xxii. 16.

† St. Mark i. 24.

"Make not My Father's house an house of merchandize."^a He was either a dangerous fanatic, or a man of singular power and daring. And if His words meant anything they claimed a divine authority for His acts, a Sonship with God for Himself. For by saying that God was His Father, He made Himself equal with God. Friends and enemies might have said, as well then as at a later time, that "never man spake like this man." The public attention was drawn to Him. One of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, came to Him for further teaching. He, like so many others, finds the Lord's words too hard for comprehension, almost too hard for belief. The woman of Samaria is astonished at His insight into her past and present life. She hastens back to her friends, entreating them to come and see a man which had told her all that ever she did. And she asks, "Is not this the Christ?" as if none other than an affirmative answer could be given to her question. The Samaritans come forth, already believing on Him for the saying of the woman. But after the Lord has spent two days with them they declare that it is not for her saying that they believe, but because they have heard Him themselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. The miracle next in order recorded, the healing, by

^a St. John ii. 15.

the word spoken by Jesus at Cana, of the nobleman's son who lay sick at Capernaum, exemplifies in a different way the power of the word of Jesus. In the sixth chapter we have that wonderful discourse concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, at which many were offended, and walked no more with Him. His words were here a savour of death unto death to many. They were, on the other hand, a savour of life unto life to others. Lord, to whom shall we go? asks St. Peter, speaking in the name of the twelve; Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Some time after this, in the last year of His ministry, the Lord went up to Jerusalem, at the Feast of Tabernacles, and there taught openly in the Temple. The people were astonished at His doctrine, and His boldness. Thereupon followed the attempt of the rulers to take Him, and they sent forth their officers. We can well imagine these men, jealous for the interests of their employers, eager to fulfil their errand and to win approbation, gradually forcing their way through the crowd to be within hearing of the well-known and disagreeable preacher, now become more daring and aggressive than ever. The day passes, and their errand is not accomplished. They have had no opportunity of taking Him secretly, and they were

not prepared to make a public disturbance. Then came the last day, that great day, of the feast, on which they heard the words of Jesus concerning thirst; and the living water, and the coming gift of the Holy Ghost. Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." Some of them would have taken Him. The officers return to the Chief Priests, and Pharisees, but there is no prisoner accompanying them. They have this only excuse to offer, "Never man spake like this man;" an excuse uttered in a tone which expressed their awe of Him, and a certain faith mingled with this awe. The reply of the Pharisees displays not merely anger on account of the neglect of a plain duty, but irritation with their officers for having been led; or almost led, into a belief in Jesus of Nazareth; "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or the Pharisees, believed on Him? But this people which knoweth not the law are cursed."

This seems to be the main object of the earlier chapters of St. John's Gospel, indeed we might say the one great object of his Gospel throughout, to declare the power and the glory of the Lord's *Word*. He tells us more concerning the words of Jesus, and less of His miracles, than the other Evangelists,

as if he would shew us the Word of God, in His intercourse with men, and in His communion with His Father in heaven. We hear the word spoken with authority and power, with a heart-searching indignation and with a forgiving gentleness, in simplest teaching for the multitude, and in sublimest mysteries for His chosen disciples. We hear Him declare that God was His Father; that He and His Father are One. We hear Him pouring forth His soul to His Father in that wondrous prayer which no human mind can ever hope thoroughly to fathom. We see Him betrayed by Judas, and even then by a simple word,—without an effort, as it were, but by the mysterious power of His Divine title,—keeping His enemies at bay. The armed soldiery approach Him, and declare the object of their search. They seek Jesus of Nazareth. “Jesus said unto them, I am!” It is the title of the Great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the self-existent One, Who, sending forth Moses to be the deliverer of the chosen people, would be known as the great I AM. “As soon then as Jesus had said unto them, I am, they went backward, and fell to the ground.” Follow Him to the Cross. Stay with Him to the end. Listen, so far as it is permitted you, to the sayings of the great forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension; to St. Paul, and to St. John. And then say,

with these awe-struck, half-persuaded, officers of the Jewish rulers, "Never man spake like this man."

We are not to suppose that St. John is alone in his testimony to the power of Christ's word. The other Evangelists have given theirs, although not so particularly. They relate many miracles done by Him through His word. For instance they have recorded that with authority He commanded the unclean spirits, and they obeyed Him; that He bade the raging winds and waves hold their peace and be still, and immediately there was a great calm; that His own people, at the commencement of His ministry, though they were offended at Him, were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power.*

ε. We, knowing Who He is, the Very Word of God, feel that it could hardly have been otherwise. We are astonished rather at His silence than at His words, the silence of the thirty years' retirement with His Blessed Virgin Mother while so awful and so weighty a charge lay upon Him as the redemption of a world. We are astonished at His silence in the judgment hall, when, beset by false accusations, by insults and reproaches, He answered to never a word. We, knowing that He is the Word of God, by Whom all things were made, and without Whom was not any-

* St. Mark i. 27; St. Matt. viii. 26; St. Luke iv. 32.

thing made that was made, feel that at any moment, as at the Creation, He had only to speak, and, as He spoke, so it should be done.

Let us proceed now to consider some of the instances in which our Blessed Lord spake as never man spake. The words themselves we may suppose to have been little remarkable, for He had been bred up in a country place as the son of a carpenter, without education, working for His daily bread. And although in Him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yet He does not appear to have manifested before men any other knowledge of earthly things than that which was supplied to Him by His own human observation, experience, and reasoning. He did not speak with enticing words of man's wisdom, gratifying itching ears. And yet, even when speaking of earthly things, there was that in His manner which attracted and awed the multitude. The common people heard Him gladly. All the people were very attentive to hear Him. Very often He spoke to them only in parables which they could not understand, reserving the interpretation for the hour when He should be alone with His disciples. Very often His doctrinal teaching was as simple as it could be. At other times it was novel and strange; and this may have attracted the people; the more so when they understood

that the Pharisees were offended and sought His ruin. However, though His sayings were sometimes hard to be understood,—sometimes exceedingly simple, (so simple as to be obeyed most reluctantly and painfully,) sometimes new and strange, the people were drawn to listen to Him. Eighteen hundred years have passed away since His voice was heard in the streets of Jerusalem. But may we not say in our turn, as we read His words, or hear His voice in our souls, that never man spake, never can man speak, like this man.

What, then, gave to His words this singular influence, this power of winning affection, of striking awe, and rousing hatred? Surely the truth which inspired them, the Truth which He was. There is that within the heart of man which makes Him love the truth, and desire it, and fight against it, and fear it, and hate it, almost at one and the same moment. The Saviour drew all men unto Him, although their own evil natures would not suffer them to stay with Him. His bitterest foes, the Scribes and Pharisees, seem, as it were, fascinated by Him. Whenever He is preaching at Jerusalem there they are among the crowd, listening to His words. But His truth shone through them, and exposed them. He saw their hypocrisy, their love of vain glory, their perversion of the divine doctrines entrusted to them for the

instruction and comfort of the multitude. It is in vain they tempt Him. They ask Him about paying tribute, and He defeats their cunning. They bring to Him the woman taken in adultery, and He sends them away, every one convicted in his own heart. He finds them out, and they know it. That strange and varied power which we discover in the writings of His Spirit dwelt in Him in all its fulness. His written words are like His spoken words. "Has not the Bible spoken to millions upon millions of hearts, as it were, with the very voice of God Himself? Have not its words burned within, till men have seen palpably the Divine in that which spake within them? Is there not, besides the external evidence to its truth as the Book of God, an inward conviction also, based upon its witness with our spirit? Ask Him who studies it in devout meditation and prayer, whether his longer and more continued study has altered his estimate of the Book as a Divine Revelation. He will tell you that never book spake to him as that Book; that it has consoled him in sorrow for which there seemed no consolation on this side the grave; that it has wiped away tears that it seemed could only be wiped away in that far land where sadness shall be no more; that it has pleaded gently during long seasons of spiritual coldness; that it has infused strength against half-victorious temp-

tation in hours of weakness; that it has calmed in moments of excitement; that it has given to better emotions a permanence, and to stirred up feelings a reality; that it has made itself felt to be what it is."^x Yes; This Blessed Book has seen into the heart, penetrating to its inmost depths, convincing of sin, and shewing the way to God, according to the wants of each. So it was, no doubt, with the words of Him, the Very Word of the Father. His truth smote into the hearts of His hearers, and the more effectually as being directed by that Wisdom unto which all hearts are open. Our preaching would of course be far more effectual if we knew more accurately the wants of our hearers. Perhaps one is vexed with a doubt; another is haunted by temptation to some grievous sin; another is full of sorrow, and in need of comfort; another is returning by the way of repentance, and needing a special assurance of forgiveness, yet afraid to speak either of his repentance or his sins. We, mortal and short-sighted preachers, can but draw the bow at a venture. He could see, in the very centre of the thickest crowd, the heart which needed His word. He spoke, and the mark was hit. Just as one of you, my Brethren, might wonder if, Sunday after Sunday, I should happen to speak preciously of your spiritual troubles during the

^x See "Aids to Faith," pp. 409, 410.

past week, and offer you in every sermon the advice and comfort you require, so did they wonder who heard the spirit-searching, spirit-piercing, words of Jesus. They went to try *Him*, and His words tried *them*. How was it that His words struck home in this way? They could not tell. All that they could say was that "never man spake like this man."

They must have remarked, besides, the *power* of His word in the working of miracles. Some few of His mighty works may have been done in silence. The poor creature who touched Him in the press received the boon she sought through her touch of faith. She stole the mercy from Him, He all the while knowing her need, and making her whole. But in almost every other case He spoke the word of health and life; and even here He confirms the miracle by His word, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." He takes the ruler's daughter by the hand, and bids her arise. He calls the fishermen of Galilee, and the receiver of customs, to leave all and follow Him; and they do so. He bids the devils come out of the grievously vexed; and they obey. He summons Lazarus, now dead four days, to come forth; and he, bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes, hears and is obedient. He rebukes the Pharisees, He baffles them. He shames them.

And as He surpasses all men in the wisdom

and power of His word, so He surpasses them in *daring*. He claims to be the Christ, the Son of God, equal with God. He demands equal honour with the Father. He represents Himself to be One with the Father, about to ascend to reign in the glory of the Father for ever, having received all power in heaven and earth. No *man* has ever dared to speak thus. No man has ever dared to speak of the mysteries of highest heaven as of things known to him, and seen by him, ere he came into the world. No man has ever dared to hold communion with the Almighty Creator as did Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary; "Now, O Father, glorify Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." These words stand by themselves, the utterances of Him Who, being man, was more than man, Who spake with a Divine voice of His own eternal life and glory.

Once more; as never man spake like this man in power and authority, in wisdom manifested in various ways, and especially in knowledge of the hearts of men, in boldness both by prophecy of things to come, by His revelation of the things of God, and by His familiar communings with the Father, so we may add that never man spake like Him in all that constitutes the *loveableness* of man. The people at Nazareth wondered at

the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. If His word was with power it was also with love. He loved His own. He sought them, winning the sinful from their evil way, instructing the ignorant, softening the hard-hearted, to the last. As He hangs in His anguish upon the Cross we hear His voice comforting the now penitent thief with the promise of Paradise, and providing a solace for the broken heart of His sorrowing Mother. He loved His own, and unto the end. His love was not prompted, as so much of ours is, only by a yearning after sympathy in the hour of distress. No sooner is the victory won, and Christ, risen from the dead never more to suffer or to die, has returned a conqueror to earth, than He scatters His messages of forgiveness and love to His unfaithful followers. He tells the eager Magdalene, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to My God, and your God."^a

All their desertion and their denial is forgiven them. They are His Brethren, children of the same Father, not servants now, more than friends; they are Brethren. This is His message to them. Before evening He has met them. He talks with two of them by the way, and their hearts burn within them at His words. He stands among them, and His word is "Peace;" Peace! to all

^a St. John xx. 17.

those who so lately forsook Him and fled. A little longer, and He is taken from them ; and His last words are blessing.

After His Ascension He is seen by some of His saints, seen and also heard by others. From His throne on high He speaks to Saul the persecutor, identifying Himself with His Church, " Why persecutest thou Me ? " He holds converse with the beloved Apostlè, manifesting forth His glory as " He that liveth, and became dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." ^a Now, mark among the last recorded words of the Saviour this gracious invitation, " Let him that is athirst, come ; and whosoever will let Him take the water of life freely." ^b He is the same in loving words then, sixty years after His Ascension, He is the same now, as when He cried, standing in the Temple, on the last day, that great day of the feast, " If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

All the words of the Lord Jesus demand our deepest, our most loving, attention. We can never study them enough. The more we study them the more we shall know Him, love Him, be drawn to follow Him. But we cannot read His words, still less such a chapter as this morning's lesson, (St. John vii.) least of all the seventeenth chapter of the same Gospel, without feeling the deepest awe, without confessing that indeed never

^a Rev. i. 18.

^b Rev. xxi. 17.

man spake like Jesus of Nazareth. And this must not be all. They who testified thus afterwards laid violent hands upon Him. We must listen, and learn, and follow. Can we not take up the points of our wonderment, and turn them into so many prayers, into a sort of Litany of the words of the Lord Jesus?—"O Lord Jesus, Who didst speak with all wisdom, knowing the hearts of men, speak Thou to me according to my wants. Thou, Who didst speak with all power, cast out of my heart all that is devilish, all that is earthly, by Thy mighty word. Thou Who didst call Lazarus, four days dead, out of the tomb, call me out of the tomb of sin. Speak the word, and I shall be healed. Thou Who didst by Thy word, call Thy disciples, call me also; Bid me come unto Thee, and follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. Thou Who didst speak with all boldness, speak to me of heavenly things, that I too, may know them. Speak of me in Thy communings with Thy Father, interceding for me, unworthy though I am. Thou Who didst speak gracious words, ever speak so to me words of favour, of grace, of gifts. Thou Who didst say to so many penitents, Thy sins are forgiven thee, pronounce to me the absolution and remission of my sins. Say unto my soul I am thy salvation. Speak to me as Thy friend, or Thy brother, if Thou wilt; or, at least, as Thy servant. Invite me to

Thee, that in Thee I may find rest, eternal rest, for my weariness, food for my hunger, even the Bread of Life, drink for my thirst, even that Living Water which who-soever drinks shall never thirst again. Thou Who didst speak to the dying thief speak to me like words of promise in my dying hour, and open to me the gates of Paradise. Thou, the Great Judge of all, Who shalt speak to all the words of their eternal doom, speak to me in mercy at that awful day, and for Thy merit's sake, and for nought else, bid me enter into the kingdom prepared for those that love Thee, that I may see Thy face for ever, and for ever hear Thy words. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

The Woman of Samaria.

“Then said the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”—St. John iv. 9, 10.

WE are all, I suppose, familiar with the conversation of our Blessed Lord with the woman of Samaria. We think of Him, as soon as the subject is mentioned, sitting heated and wearied at the well-side, seeking rest and shelter from the midday sun. A woman from the neighbouring city of Sychar approaches, bearing her pitcher upon her head. And as Eliezer, Abraham's steward, had nearly two thousand years before asked for water from the daughter of Bethuel, so the Lord of all

asks the woman of Samaria, "Give Me to drink." It was a simple incident to her that a stranger should ask for a draught of water; yet on that meeting was to depend her own eternal salvation, and the salvation of many of her friends and relatives. But at first she answers Him jestingly, and afterwards doubtfully, when He speaks of the Gift of God. She knew not, and desired not. Nevertheless such was the fulness of divine love towards her, that He will not leave her until He has drawn from her the petition, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." He awakens her desire for knowledge. He kindles her love. He confirms her faith. He makes her an instrument in the conversion of her friends and neighbours, and also, we may presume, in the preparation for that great apostolic harvest when Samaria gladly received the word of God.^c

Let us consider three points in this history :—

- I. The love of Divine grace ;
 - II. The woman's resistance to this grace ;
 - III. Her reception and employment of it.
- I.—Consider the love of Divine grace manifested in its working for the recovery of the sinner. We are told in the opening of the chapter that Jesus left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And He must

^c Acts viii. 5—14.

needs go through Samaria. The Holy Evangelist has carefully recorded all the preceding events which led to this journey. He informs us that the disciples of Jesus were baptizing at the same time with John the Baptist, that there arose a question between John's disciples and the Jews concerning purifying, or baptizing, and that on this account Jesus left Judæa for Galilee. And in these few simple words, "He must needs go through Samaria," we seem to recognize the constraining power of Eternal Love. As if that love, ever burning in the Heart of Jesus for the salvation of sinners, beheld long before, by the divine spirit of omniscience, this poor sinful creature coming at noontide to fill her pitcher at the well. As if the love of sinners, rather let me say as if the love of that one poor sinner, was laying a necessity upon the Almighty Saviour to take that particular journey for her salvation. He foreknew her, that her heart would receive the proffered grace. Therefore He undertakes the journey through Samaria, the weary walk of that day. Yet why should we wonder? It was not so long as the journey from the height of heaven to Bethlehem, nor so painful as the journey from Jerusalem to Calvary. Thus He sought out sinners. Thus He seeks them out even now. He orders all things according to the loving wisdom of His Providence, that He may find the best opportunity of bringing

His glad tidings before those who will love Him.

When He does at last reach the well-side, He is faint and weary; too weary to go with the disciples to buy food. So, while they labour for the meat that perisheth, He will labour for the meat that endureth unto the everlasting life of human souls. He was never too weary for such labour. He could pray for St. Peter in the immediate expectation of His own agony and death. As He hung torn and bleeding upon the Cross He could win the affection of one of the railing malefactors. And now the woman of Sychar approaches Him. How gently and wisely He begins the conversation which is to have such a marvellous ending! He might have charged her at once with her sin, summoned her to repentance, and in the event of her refusal have left her. I am afraid we are often too apt to think of, and deal with, our erring brothers and sisters in this way. We mean well; we feel a duty towards them, which is very right; and yet we discharge this duty in so offensive and disagreeable a manner as almost to ensure their rejection of our warnings. We see an act of gross sin, it may be; our conscience tells us that we ought to try to point out the wickedness of the sin. But we set to work in such a clumsy, inconsiderate, way that our kindly-meant words are very naturally rejected. Our dear Lord

was more gentle with sinners. He forgets His own weariness to ask a favour from her as she is occupied in her daily duties, putting Himself under an obligation to her. And this manner of addressing her was the more remarkable because of the separation between the Jews and Samaritans. It would not have been surprising if He had *done* her a kindness; but to stoop so low as to *ask* a favour of her, was indeed amazing. There is more humility in asking than in giving. We can very often so far forgive an enemy as to be ready to *do* a kindness. But to *ask* a favour is more than we can stoop to. It would be lowering ourselves too much. Yet it was thus that Jesus acted towards the woman of Samaria; and it is thus He acts towards us. He asks from us before He gives; but He asks little in order to give much. Here, He asks a cup of water, there a morsel of bread, an act of charity towards the poor, the ignorant, the sick, and the afflicted, that He may restore fourfold even in this life. Here He demands that we should give up the forbidden fruit, some unlawful pleasure, some evil habit or connection, some excessive attachment to one of His creatures which beguiles our heart from Himself. Here, again, he asks a few tears of repentance, a sorrow for sin, that we may be led to Him, and be filled with grace and peace, and all the fruits of the Spirit. Satan offered the apple that He

might deprive Adam of Paradise. Christ asks us to put away the apple that He may give us heaven. How shall we stand before Him at the great day if we have given Him no drink, or if we have given Him to drink only vinegar mixed with gall?

In spite of her jesting answer, "I wonder that you, being a Jew, ask drink of me who am a Samaritan," He continues to speak gently and lovingly to her. He begins to tell her of Living Water, the precious Gift of God, thus raising her curiosity to enquire more concerning it, and preparing her heart to desire it. Then He instructs her until she asks, "Sir, give me this water that I thirst not." Having now gained her entire attention and confidence, He proceeds—but how gently!—to speak to her of her sin. He wins from her a confession; "I have no husband." Even then He does not upbraid her, but places before her her past life that she may rather condemn herself. So gently does He convince her of sin, and open her heart, until she recognizes Him as a Prophet. And at last, when she declares her expectation of the Messiah, He reveals Himself openly, "I that speak unto thee am HE."

So He would work with you, my Brethren, and with all men. To this same blessed state His grace would bring us all, in spite of our opposition. Although His Spirit will

not always strive with men, yet He is content to strive with them long.

II.—Let us now consider our second point:—Her opposition to grace. For this opposition is a lesson to us. It supplies a proof of the Saviour's persevering, long-suffering, love, and also a warning lest we go too far in our opposition. He might, we know, have converted her with a word as He converted Saul. But He acted here for our instruction, that in this woman's opposition we might learn something of our own wicked obstinacy in so often, and so long, rejecting His offers of grace.

She commences by an objection founded upon her *position*; "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" She persuades herself that He has no right to demand this service from her, because the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Now is not this the sort of excuse which is made every day when men are exhorted to live a life nearer to God, in greater self-denial, and in the higher walks of Christian perfection? When we propose to you the giving up some of the time spent in worldly toil, or worldly pleasure, and the devoting it to more frequent prayer, to more frequent Church-going, to meditation upon God and Eternity, to holy reading, to works of mercy, and when we urge you to more frequent

Communion, is not the reply of the heart very often this, (even if you do not say it in so many words,) that we are demanding from you sacrifices of time, and money, and pleasure, which are all very well for the ministers of religion, and for such as pretend to go out of the world, but that your life is in the world, and that every man must serve God in his own station of life, and save himself accordingly.

There is just enough truth in the answer to make it doubly dangerous. Religion does make different duties, but not two sorts of Christian lives. The Queen and the subject, the parent and the child, the statesman and the mechanic, the master and the servant, have each duties to perform inseparable from their state of life. But a closer walk with God is equally necessary to all who have been born again by Baptism into Jesus Christ. Can you venture to think that there is another law, another Gospel, another hope, for those who live in the world? that you are less members of Christ, less children of God, less bound to take up your Cross and follow the Lord Jesus, less strangers and sojourners upon earth? Did He ever in His preaching admit any such excuses, or say that a godly, righteous, and sober, life was required from some, and not from all. No; He said that such a life was required from all without exception; and He

warned His disciples that the children of this world would endeavour to set God's requirements at nought, and to escape from them. What would you say by excusing yourselves from the strict demands of the Gospel? Do you wish to avoid the necessity of repentance? If you have never committed sin, if your home and your business, and your companions, have never tempted you to evil, and led you into wrong, then, and only then, you need no repentance. Do you wish to escape the labour of frequent prayer? If you find in your daily life that you have no need to be preserved from danger and temptation, no need of grace, then, and only then, you have no need of prayer. Oh! my Brethren, lay this well to heart; the more you are obliged to mix with the world in your profession, in your trade, and in your daily labour, the more you are inclined to strive after this world's wealth, or compelled to struggle after a poor subsistence, so much the more need have you to keep the Lord always before you, and to bring every thought of your heart into subjection to the law of Christ. God created the world. He has permitted temptation. And He has bidden men to live in the world, by the help of His grace, pure, noble, patient, manly, letting their light shine before men.

The woman of Samaria was wrong there-

fore in pleading the difference between the Jews and Samaritans as an excuse for not giving to Jesus that for which He asked. And so you will be wrong, if, when He calls you to serve Him better, or to give up anything for His sake, you plead the business, or pleasure, or customs, of the world, as if there were a necessary difference between yourselves and any others who try to serve God, and as if you would therefore be excused.

But, perhaps, this is not so much your real reason, as a sort of conviction that you are really unable to do what He requires of you. You hope to die in a state of grace, but—at present!—*there* is the difficulty. Christ calls you, promises you His grace, declaring that Godliness has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come, and you reply doubtingly, in words very much like those of this Samaritan woman, “Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou this living water?”

It occasionally happens that men have lived so long in sin, without thought of God, or fear of offending Him, without prayer, or public worship, or the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Communion, that they dare not begin to fathom the depths of their sinful conscience. It seems to them a hopeless task. The well is deep. Or they feel by

nature so weak in character, so ready for pleasure, so unready for devotion, that they cannot venture upon the attempt to change their life. It is too hard for them. The well is deep. Or they see that a truly Christian life, full of prayer and watchfulness, and self-sacrifice for the good of others, is a very serious matter. They cannot give up the old ways. They do not see what satisfaction is to be found in the new. They excuse themselves on the score of the difficulty. The well is deep.

How foolish all these excuses are! Our natural good sense tells us so. Yet we venture to speak a falsehood to God which in our inmost hearts we are ashamed of. If we have a depth of sin upon our conscience which we scarcely dare to glance at, much less to examine closely into, if we feel that year after year has seen us wilfully staying away from the Lord's Table, still neglecting those simple duties which conscience bids us fulfil, what shall we do? The burdened conscience is not the less heavily burdened because it refuses to know the gift of God, and to ask for the living water. It need not turn its back for ever upon Him Who offers, because the well is deep.

And so again, if our whole natural man seems indisposed for Christian joys, does not eternity, I would ask, seem to us worthy of some degree of self-discipline? The tastes

and pleasures, the fashions and amusements, of earth are sweet, and yet we have denied ourselves occasionally for a season in order to gain wealth, or honour, or a future increase of these very pleasures. Can we not do as much for eternal wealth? for the honour that never fadeth? for the pleasure for evermore? And let us take courage in this thought, that the change from coldness, or from lukewarmness, to the loving service of God, the growth in grace unto the measure of the perfect man, is not the work of man's unaided strength. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of God, Who can make us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us.

Or again, do the requirements of Christian perfection terrify us? Does it all seem too hard? Bear in mind that the law of Christ is a perfect law of liberty, adapted to the weakness and the necessities of men. The devil once tried to persuade men that the law of Christ was absurd, as being the law of a crucified man. Now he tries to persuade men that it is hopeless, impracticable. Make the trial first, I beseech you, before you despair. It was true that the well was deep. But He Who by the word and rod of Moses could draw water from the stony rock can overcome all difficulties, even to softening the stony hearts of sinful men, and drawing forth tears of repentance and of love, giving

to the believer at last to have in himself wells of water springing forth into everlasting life.

III.—It remains now to consider the woman's reception and employment of grace. The words of Jesus carry conviction with them. She listens, and at last exclaims, "Sir, give me this water." How often does the loving Lord strive with our hearts, trying to wring this prayer from us, that He may give; and yet we will not speak! Is there not very often that old feeling that religion will interfere with our pleasures which keeps us silent when just one word of prayer might break down the barrier, and let in floods of grace upon our souls. Oh, my Brethren, if God should bless my words to you this day, before you leave these sacred walls, ask Him, with all your heart, to give you this water of life.

And, observe, when Jesus speaks to her of her home, how her character is now softened, how at once she confesses her sin to Him, and meekly listens as He tells her all that ever she did. What a humble spirit! Are we like her? Not often, I fear. How unwilling are we to confess our sins, even to ourselves! how angry and offended if another should speak to us of them! We deny them. We justify them. We do anything rather than admit our fault; and while denying the sin we do not always repent of it.

But she immediately honours Him as a Prophet, and forthwith requests Him to clear up her doubts upon other points of religious belief. Then He reveals Himself as the Messiah. See how rapidly she goes from strength to strength. It is because she has suffered grace to conquer her evil nature. It is because she has corresponded to grace given that she receives more. We wonder at the sudden greatness of her faith, and warmth of her zeal. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, not daring to join Him openly. But this woman, now that she has found the living water, like Andrew who called his own brother Simon, leaves her waterpot, and runs to call the men of her city. "Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him, and He abode with them two days. And many more believed because of His own word, and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

A few words more to sum up the lesson of this history. See, and understand, the love of redeeming grace. If you have been led to fear because Christ has said, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him," take courage again in His words, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." He orders

nothing by chance, but all for the good of men. You hear a sermon. Can you not find some word, at any rate, in the text, which may do you good? You see a poor man. Has not your Saviour come before you that you may give Him a cup of cold water, and gain a reward like that of the Samaritan woman? You see the funeral procession. He has sent it by at that time to remind you that you in your turn must die. So He ordered His journey through Samaria, to save souls.

And although grace will overcome much opposition, so that we need not despair because we have resisted it before, let us take heed how often we receive that grace in vain. The sad tale which when we first heard it drew tears from our eyes, will, if often repeated, at last lose all its effect upon our heart. If it were not so, how could we read that sad and shameful story of the agony and the Crucifixion of Jesus, without tears of sorrow at His sufferings, and at man's sin? You may neglect the call of grace. Yet to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Now think, Brethren. what an example and encouragement is given in this history to all who receive the word with joy and bring forth fruit. One little prayer, "Give me this water that I thirst not!" Oh! how little does He require of us, before He gives;

how small a key opens to us the richest treasures of His love! This woman, first converted, becomes a means of grace to all the people of her city, because she confesses Him openly before men. They believe; they act; they seek Him; they open to Him; and He goes in to dwell with them, and to abide with them. All this from once hearing of Him; until their faith and love are forever confirmed by His presence with which they have constrained Him to bless them.

Therefore let us pray Him from Whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed, to give us to "drink of this living water." And when He has done so, turn it, I beseech you, my Brethren, to good account. Straightway ask Him to give you so much that you may never thirst again. No need for you to be disheartened if perchance at first it is little. If you have but the sighing of the contrite, the desire of the sorrowful, heart, you have already grace enough for your salvation, provided that you use it aright. And enough, not for your own salvation only, but perhaps for many more of your family, your friends, your acquaintances. This woman could not know the effect of her words, even when she called the Samaritans to see the man who had told her all that ever she did. Nor can we tell the effect of our words, and our actions, good or bad. Yet it may be with us, as it has been a

thousand times before with others. One lifting up of the heart may be followed by the grace of a perfect conversion. And then our conversion may be the one link by which thousands of souls are to be hereafter united to their God, a note which shall echo for ever through the long halls of future ages, an effectual encouragement to fainting hearts, an effectual call to sinners to come to Him Who alone can give the Water of Life freely.

SERMON IX.

The Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain.

(Preached 16th Sunday after Trinity, 1863.)

"And He came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise.

And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother."—St. Luke vii. 14, 15.

THERE are some portions of Holy Scripture so exquisitely simple, that the most ignorant cannot hear them read without gaining instruction and comfort. We may class among these many parables, and almost all the miracles, of our Blessed Lord. The Holy Evangelists, writing under the direction of the Divine Spirit, were careful not to overlay, and so to darken, the wisdom and mercy of the Lord's words and actions. They are true to nature in their simple account of His

miracles; and so we see Him more clearly, and understand Him better. Nowhere is a wonderful work of mercy told in fewer and plainer words than this miracle of the raising of the widow's son at Nain. It stands before us like a picture. We see the funeral procession passing through the city's open gates, the bearers carrying the bier, the weeping mother following. How much anguish is told in that one sentence, "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow!" We see Jesus, the sympathiser, the comforter, the raiser of the dead. A mighty work of tender mercy is performed. The dead man is raised. The Lord delivers him to his mother. Heaviness is changed into joy. And they return to their once more happy home to praise Him, while He passes through them, and onwards, to do good elsewhere.

But there is often a deeper lesson in the Lord's miracles than the casual reader would suppose. Many miracles speak, certainly this one speaks, to the Church as a parable. It is hardly possible to dwell upon this passage of Scripture without carrying on the interpretation to that spiritual death from which Christ alone can raise us. St. Augustine speaks of such spiritual interpretation as if it were a sacred language contained beneath the literal meaning. And as one who cannot read may admire the artistic skill and beauty of a manuscript yet not understand

the meaning contained in its words, so one may behold with wonder the miracles of Christ yet not comprehend all that they are intended to teach. While another may both admire the characters and beauty of the writing, and also understand the language, may wonder at His mercy, and understand its lesson.^d

Let us then reverently endeavour to draw out the spiritual meaning of this miracle. "When He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out." The death of the body is the truest type of the death of the soul dead in trespasses and sins. Our Lord ever made light of the death of the body as being a sleep. But He has taught us to see in it the type of the soul's death. An image of the spiritual death is shewn by the cold and lifeless form. Sight is gone from the eyes, hearing from the ears, speech from the lips, motion from the limbs. It has no perceptions of the outer world. The living and the dead have nothing in common, not even language. The channels of communication are closed. A little longer and corruption will have begun.

We all understand what death is. If we had not learned to believe, on Divine authority, in the Resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come, we might justly regard death as the most terrible of all evils.

^d Williams on the Gospels.

For it is the corruption and destruction of the body, the apparent end of our being, the separation from all with which we have hitherto held communication. But there is a greater evil than the death of the body, an evil which we know to be greater, but which we do not so fully realize, and that is the death of the soul. You may be rejoicing in strength of mind and body, surrounded with friends, looking forward to long life, with much goods laid up for many years, perhaps making a good profession outwardly ; and yet to you the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart may have applied words spoken long ago to an apostate Church, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."^e

That alone is life which is in Christ, which can hear His words, and speak with Him ; which can see Him and recognize Him ; which can feed upon Him ; which can work His works, for all others are dead works ; which puts away sin, for all sin is evil, corruption, and destruction. Christ is the life of the soul. Those years only which we have lived in Him can rightly be regarded as life. And in this sense the Book of Wisdom speaks of the good man in his early death that "he being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time," as having lived to God.^f

But of sin St. Paul writes that those who

^e Rev. iii. 1.

^f Wisdom iv. 13.

continue in it are "alienated from the life of God," "dead in trespasses and sins," "bringing forth dead works."⁸ The prodigal son "was dead and became alive again." The sinner in the world is signified by the dead man carried out.

For as the dead corpse has no inherent power of motion but is carried away at the will of others, so the sinner, alienated from the life of God, is carried out of the society of God's holy ones by the evil passions to which he has delivered himself. Actions often repeated grow into habit, and evil habit is a second evil nature, by which man is *carried out*, rather than *led*, to his eternal destruction. Or, indeed, are we not justified in speaking of habitual sins rather as so many evil spirits, living, active, energizing persons? We read in Holy Scripture of lying spirits, unclean spirits, evil or malignant spirits, as if the soldiers of the host of Hell were busied each about their own particular temptation, with which they ply the children of God. If this be so, we perceive who and what they are who carry the bier on which the dead man lies. And the bier on which the dead soul lies may represent to us the body, not duly honoured as being the temple of the Holy Ghost but degraded into a vessel of fleshly appetites, a fair outside full of all uncleanness.

⁸ Ephes. iv. 18; ii. 1.

So far then is represented to us the sinner in a state of habitual mortal sin, dead, and carried out on the bier of his fleshly lusts by the evil spirits. He is not long dead. The body is separated from the spirit, but not yet corrupted and destroyed. Still he is *dead*.

There is a mother weeping over her son. Fresh proof of death if it were needed. For these tears would surely rouse him if he could be roused at all. These tears are witnesses of tender love and anxious care. The widowed mother is the type of the Church of Christ. Ever, continually, her intercession ascends for her perishing and perished children that He would awaken and arouse them from the dead, and give them life. Ever, continually, her penitential tears are flowing as they are carried out. Her heart yearns for them, if by any means praying by their bedside, following them until all is over, the Lord meeting her may have compassion upon her. Therefore she beseeches Him that it may please Him to have mercy upon *all* that have erred and are deceived, "mercy upon all men." The widow's tears have their spiritual interpretation in the sorrow of the whole Church over every son that is dead in sin. The people of God on earth lament over the dead soul. The angels who rejoice over the repentant sinner mourn, no doubt, over the prodigal. But in our earthly experience we observe that the mourner's tears

are shed far more plentifully over the dead body than over the dead soul. Pleading is made with fountains of tears to Christ, the healer of bodily disease, the restorer from the bed of death; but the pleading for the sick and dying *soul* is cold and heartless in comparison. If only the slightest sickness threaten a beloved child, the parents' anxious care seeks an immediate remedy. They forbid their child to enter a house infected by disease, or to associate with others who might convey any dreaded disorder. Yet the same parents, so anxious for the bodily health, are perhaps themselves the very cause of that *spiritual* illness of the child which will at some future day terminate in the death of its soul. In the struggle of life, in their anxiety to provide for a child's temporal welfare, too little thought is bestowed upon the associations of early life. Religious principle is forgotten in the hope of worldly advancement. And if the child of worldly parents should, through his obedience to their covetousness or ambition, lose his own soul in gaining advantage in this life, will it not be written of them, as of the idolatrous Israelites, "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils?"^h Oh! if we ever grieve over our children's bodily infirmities, we ought to grieve a thousand-fold over any evidences of departure from God.

^h Psalm cvi. 37.

We ought to imitate that pious mother of old who daily pleaded with strong crying and tears for her unbelieving son; until at length the answer came, and he, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, earned himself a name in the Calendar of the Catholic Church, as Saint Augustine, a Bishop, and a Confessor for the faith. To such tears the Lord will show Himself ever compassionate. And we may hope that we, so pleading for a child or a beloved friend, may before the end hear His gracious words, "Weep not," and see His gracious work of raising the dead in sin to newness of life.

His first care is for the mother. "When He saw her He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Although there is no mention of any petition actually addressed by her to Him, yet her tears were a prayer. The merciful Saviour needeth not the utterance of words; "Lord, Thou hast heard the *desire* of the poor." And He Who heareth and answereth the unspoken desire of a mother for a son's bodily life will never turn a deaf ear to the parent's prayer for the salvation of their children's souls.

"And He came and touched the bier." He came near. For Christ is life, and sin is death. The sick, the lame, the deaf, the blind, could come near to Him. But, after death, the sinner cannot of himself recover,

or lay hold on, eternal life. He cannot draw near to Christ. Therefore Christ must come near to him. To this end coming down from heaven He took our nature upon Him. Of the seed of Abraham, "He taketh hold,"^j writes St. Paul, shewing the nearness of God the Son to mankind. He became partaker of flesh and blood, that man, on whom the sentence of death had fallen, might not be hurried away to an eternal tomb. If any sinner is to be saved the same Lord must come near unto Him, making Him partaker of the divine nature, that he may have that life which Christ came to give, and have it more abundantly, unto eternal life. His Incarnation was life to the world from death. His presence in the abode of the departed was life, for many of the saints which slept arose; and life in the highest sense of all, as the bursting of the gates of hell, the opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers. His presence at the bier of this dead man, and at the grave of Lazarus, was life. His presence with us is life to soul and body alike. Without Him we are dead. But He is not far from us; and, by the grace of His Sacraments made effectual by the power of His Spirit, we are one with Him and He with us.

ⁱ "He touched the bier, and they that bare it stood still." When death is to be changed

^j Heb. ii. 16.

into life the touch of the Saviour, always in reality full of mercy, works more commonly by the exercise of chastening discipline than by rich and gracious gifts. He rouses the sinner by the touch of affliction. "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends," was the cry of Job, "for the hand of God hath touched me." David's complaint was "Thy hand is heavy upon me day and night."^k When the Lord's hand is laid upon the body, in which, as on a bier, the evil spirits are hurrying the soul away to the burial of the deathless death, when manly strength and womanly grace are marred by disease, when the mental powers are distracted by agony and fear, there is an awakening to consciousness, though there may not be a resurrection to perfect life. Or the Lord's hand may be laid, as at the first with Job, on family, and on worldly wealth. Anything which takes the soul away from God, which wraps it in forgetfulness, may be compared to the bier of death. The Lord touches it, and the bearers, the evil spirits of profligacy, or ambition, or pride, or covetousness, or wrath, are stopped in their hurried course. Though this cessation is not in itself life it is something of a rescue. Time is given before the worst is executed. It is when the grave has closed over the remains

^k Job xix. 21; Psalm xxxii. 4.

of our loved ones, and hardly until then, that we realize all the bitterness of death. There is always hope for the dying, hope for the sinner, if the disease, if the sin, is checked.

Then in this moment of calm His voice is heard, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise; and he that was dead sat up and began to speak." How this must have recalled to the Apostles' minds those words of their Lord which St. John has recorded in his fifth chapter, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live." Now was a fulfilment of His prophecy. We see in His miracle, we find in His words, the assurance of His power over the soul. No matter how long the soul has been sick even unto death, no matter if the soul is dead and carried out to burial, no, not if it is dead four days, and lie entombed with Lazarus, the dead and they that lie in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth. If God have given us repentance unto life, and we have reason to fear for any whom we love, in this proof of the Lord's power we find the confidence for our prayers. And, Brethren, if any here be sick in their souls, if any be dead in sin, let them hear the Lord's voice calling upon them now to arise. And let them,

after this example, obey the call. He does not give the life of conversion as He gives the life of the new birth. The unconscious infant born into the world receives its life as a gift from Him. It cannot at once arise and put forth its powers of brain and limb. But when He restores the dead He says unto them "Arise, come forth." You have perhaps forgotten this, and have paid no attention to His voice. You have made no answering movement, no effort to deliver yourself from the grave-clothes of sin, and the cruel hurry of the evil spirits. Then, if this be the case, and you rest contented in the same state of death, indifferent to His call, you must wait until His voice shall summon you from your grave, to stand, body and soul, before His terrible judgment-seat. This young man did what he could; little enough indeed. He could not free himself. He could not stand or walk. But he shewed his desire to escape and to exchange death for life. He sat up.

"He sat up, and began to speak." What were his words? Were they words of wonder, or of gratitude? Perhaps of both, addressed now to the Lord Who had raised him, now to the mother whose sorrow had been turned into joy. Here was a second proof of life. The struggle towards liberty is accompanied with the expression of the feelings. Without holy words and holy actions, there is no real re-

urrection of the soul. Recovery from bodily sickness is, we know, accompanied invariably with the haste to be well, to move, to talk, to exercise the long-lost, or long-repressed, powers. The soul which lives to Christ after long sickness, after death, will be impatient to prove its life to itself and to the world, impatient to work for Him, to tell of His salvation from day to day. We need not dwell upon a mother's joy, upon the joy of the Church of the Saints of God on earth, and of the Holy Angels in heaven, who rejoice over the conversion of a sinner.

This young man had made experience of death. Can you suppose that he would have desired again to enter the bier, and to be hurried off immediately to his burial? Life was sweet to him, and good for him no doubt, else the Lord would not have raised him from the dead. But is life, the life of holy obedience in Christ, sweet to you? This is the important question. Which do you love best? The life of holy obedience in Christ, or the death of sinful pleasure out of Christ? Some, after a life to Christ in childhood, have fallen away into sin and death. They are being carried away to burial. What shall we say to such? "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."¹ And some of such

¹ Ephes. v. 14.

have heard His voice, and would not hear, have felt His touch, and would not arise. Still He calls them, and touches the bier, and stops the bearers, and calls them again and again. And some have heard at last, and have arisen, and have spoken; and looking out of their bier upon the life which is life indeed, have spoken words of horror, and, choosing death, have laid them down, bidding their bearers carry them forth. St. Jude tells us how to describe such as these,—“TWICE DEAD.” Their latter end is worse than the first.

And some have heard and have been restored like this young man to a mother's arms. Taught by the Church's careful instruction to know the Lord Who has raised them from the dead, doing Him service, speaking His praise, fed at her hands by the Sacrament Which He has given for our spiritual food and sustenance, as He has said, “He that eateth Me shall live by Me, they are alive indeed.” If they believe in Him, holding fast unto the end, they shall never die.

We were all once dead, Brethren. Have we been made alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Are we alive to Him now? For life to Christ means eternal life with Him in His kingdom. Death, spiritual death, now, and

at the end of mortal life, means spiritual death for ever, where even Christ Himself shall never come to change death into life.

SERMON X.

The Communion of Saints.

(Preached All Saints' Day, 1861.)

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints.

Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.”—Rev. xv. 2, 3, 4.

THERE are so many bright and glorious thoughts crowding upon us to-day, that I have hardly known what verse of Holy Scripture to select for a text. I should almost have preferred to take for the summary of these thoughts, the Article of our Creed, “I believe in the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints.” But I have, you see,

adhered to the custom of prefacing a sermon with a text of Scripture; and if we wander from it we will at least endeavour that all that is said shall be in harmony with the one great thought of this day, the Communion of Saints.

Every sound and healthy life, whether of the individual, or of the body corporate, has its days of rejoicing and festival. Nations celebrate their anniversaries. Political societies, and other societies of less general importance, celebrate theirs. For they find them to be days of commemoration and refreshment, a renewing of vigorous life, a rallying together of doubtful members, an invitation to others to join their body, a demonstration of strength in the face of opponents, a memorial to present and, they hope, to future generations of evil overcome, of wrong vanquished by right, of firm resolve that the heirs of ancient memories will not disgrace the fame into which they have been admitted to share. Family life has its days of happy commemoration likewise. Even if sorrow has overshadowed the home, and the once unclouded day is fraught with the memories of those "not lost, but gone before," even then the day cannot pass as any common day. We remember indeed, though tears may have taken the place of smiles.

So we to-day are glad in the celebration of one of the Church's greatest festivals,

as being "members incorporate in the mystical Body of Jesus Christ our Lord, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." We have our joy, likewise, as a congregation, keeping this our Festival of Dedication; a festival which the Lord Jesus did not disdain to observe when on the Feast of Dedication He went up to the Temple at Jerusalem. The dedication of Holy Places to the Great God of Heaven has invariably been accompanied with ceremonies of rejoicing and gladness. The loving and reverent heart delights in such outward manifestations. It finds a happiness in giving to God of its substance in the sanctification to His honour of the material things of earth. Therefore the Christian Church has always made the dedication, or consecration, of her sanctuaries an act of ceremonial rejoicing, encouraging her children to observe that same day year by year as one much to be remembered by each respective congregation.

All our Churches are dedicated to the honour and glory of Almighty God, the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And together with this sacred Name we usually associate some divine Mystery, or the memory of some of the Saints of God. For, after the first and unspeakable blessing vouchsafed to us in the work of the Father, and of the Son, and of Holy Ghost, each working for us, and in us,

for man's salvation, we are bound to thank Him next for the manifestation of His glory in all His saints who have departed this life in His faith and fear. Especially are we bound to commemorate those to whom, by their acts and writings, we owe our knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. So far from detracting from the Lord's glory in this we are acknowledging and adoring His power as reflected in the life and death of His servants. It is not that one church or congregation is of Paul, and another of Apollos, another of Cephas, and another of Christ. No. All are of Christ, and of God in Christ. But, wherever we may be worshipping, the dedication of the Church to the Most Holy Trinity, or to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Holy Angels, or to the Saints in Him, will remind us of some deep mystery of our faith, of His constitution of the service done to Him in heaven and in earth, and of divine strength made perfect in human weakness. So we glorify God in His saints, as the Churches of Judæa which were in Christ glorified God in St. Paul.^m The dedication of this building as the Chapel of All Saints does not convey to our minds any engrossing idea of human merit, as if we were merely giving glory to men and women and children who lived and died hundreds of years ago. God forbid. But the mention of All Saints

^m Gal. i. 24.

brings to remembrance the mighty power of God as shewn in all who have believed in Him, feared Him, loved Him, and obeyed Him. So we celebrate our day of Dedication, seeing by faith that we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, and looking unto Jesus, the King of Saints, the author and finisher of our faith.^a

On this second celebration of our dedication festival we ought to turn our thoughts backward for a little while, and consider our privileges, our faults, and our responsibilities, as connected with this house of prayer. God alone can see what work has really been done. We have met together morning after morning to offer Him our worship; and we may trust that He, Who has assured us that He is present with the two or three gathered together in His Name, has fulfilled that promise to the little band of daily worshippers. We have assembled together in greater numbers on the Sundays. There have been so many services, so many sermons, so many Communions. Thus much we have seen. Whatever the fruit has been we leave it to God, giving honour to Him for it, whether it be much or little, acknowledging always that He alone it is Who giveth increase. If hearts have been touched, if any sinner has been awakened, if any understanding has been enlightened, if any affections have been deep-

^a Heb. xii. 1.

ened, if any fallen has been raised, if any weak one has been made strong, if any earnest one has been built up to higher purpose, if any mourner has found consolation, and any wearied one rest, to Him alone be all the glory. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us. We may, perhaps, humbly venture to hope that He has of His great mercy wrought something of this, not letting His word return unto Him void. Every heart which cares to think ought to know a little of the work of the Lord's Spirit within it. You will bear witness to yourselves, Brethren, in this. But there is another side of the question which I can feel, Brethren, if you cannot, the very humbling thought of so many prayers feebly offered amid distractions of mind, of deepest truths feebly uttered and imperfectly realized, of the inconsistency of daily life with that Gospel which I preach and you believe. Well may the minister of Christ, the steward of the mysteries of God, ask upon his knees, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Well may he fear lest his many imperfections mar the prayers which he offers before the Eternal throne on behalf of his congregation, and of the Church at large. Well may he say with the Apostle of the Gentiles, "lest after that I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." If my ministry among you be according to

the grace of God, the responsibility of profiting by it is upon you ; and upon me also ; for I cannot teach others without being taught myself. If it be not according to His grace may He supply to you what is wanting, and have mercy upon me.

And now let us turn from ourselves to the glory of this great and crowning Festival as it has to do with the whole Catholick Church. This crowning Festival, I say; for it embraces all others, and supplements them, and looks onward to the day when "the Lord our God shall come, and all His saints with Him." Each Lord's day in its turn tells of the Creation, the Resurrection, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the glories of the Co-eternal Trinity. Other festivals have reference to the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, to the acts, the lives, and the deaths, so often by cruel violence, of one or more of His servants. We do not commemorate all these by name. We have the Blessed Virgin Mother and St. John the Baptist ; the twelve Apostles with St. Paul and St. Barnabas ; the Holy Evangelists ; St. Stephen, deacon and proto-martyr ; the Holy Innocents, St. Michael and All Angels. None other, I think, are specially commemorated in our services. Some fifty more are mentioned by name in our Calendar. These are but as the few sheaves of the harvest-field bowing down to the sheaf of Joseph

while the valleys around are standing thick with corn. They are but as the few first seen of the countless stars of heaven. They are not the only ones who lived and died in His faith and fear. The Lord knoweth them that are His, those who from the foundation of the world until now have fought the good fight, have kept the faith, and have now entered into their rest. - He knoweth those who are now fighting, toiling, striving, to enter in, running with patience the race set before them. He knoweth those again whom He, in His foreknowledge, has predestinated to the adoption of sons, who shall yet be born into this world of trial to witness a good confession, to be upheld by His power, and to endure unto the end. What note does the Church take of all these? What note *should* she take? Is she like an ungrateful country which, while she rewards the leaders of an army, suffers brave hearts and strong arms to rot forgotten in an unmarked grave? No. She knows that right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.^a She remembers how St. Paul, unwilling to burden his letters with a long catalogue of names, includes all whom he has in his heart in these words, "I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with

^a Psalm cxvi. 13.

other my fellow labourers whose names are written in the Book of Life."^r

Whose names are written in the Book of Life ! Unknown, and yet well-known !^s These are they whose memories we celebrate to-day. Such honour have all His Saints. The Church seems to say with the Apostle, The time would fail me were I to tell of all by name. The world cannot know them all. For they are a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues ;^t of all times, from Adam to the latest born before the judgment ; of all ranks, high and low, rich and poor, from the monarch on the throne to the beggar upon the dunghill ; the most learned and the most ignorant of worldly wisdom. Young men and maidens, old men and children, the aged matron, the strong, and beautiful and wise of middle age, all are represented here. All in their several stations of life served their heavenly Master. Some lived and died in peace ; but these were few. For generally it is through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of God. Each had his, or her, particular trial. Each was, and is, one in a class which will represent our particular trial and temptation. Most of them suffered in the taking up of a cross, in the mortification of the flesh, in the sacrifice of things dearly prized, in patient endurance of every kind of hardness. What more many were

^r Phil. iv. 3.

^s 2 Cor. vi. 9.

^t Rev. vii. 9.

called upon to suffer the old historians of the Church will tell, as they re-echo St. Paul's words. He writes of the Old Testament Saints. They write of those of the New Testament. The story of the ten persecutions of the Christian Church comes to us with fuller particulars, and so seems to surpass in horror the brief allusion to suffering made by St. Paul. Hear what he says: "Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."^u Were not these more than conquerors through Him that loved them? They all died in faith. They all live unto Him. Even if they were dead they would deserve a remembrance from us to whom they have left a precious legacy in the deposit of the true faith, earnestly contended for, religiously guarded, sincerely handed down. But we have to-day to do not with the dead but with the living. We rejoice in

^u Heb. xi. 35—38.

the victory won by those who are members with ourselves of the one Body of Christ, the leading columns of the vast army who have fought and won their passage across the dark river and have entered into rest; who wait for us, because without us they cannot be made perfect, before they enter into their glory and their reward.

We must go higher yet indeed before we exhaust the glory of this festival. We cannot rejoice in the triumph, we cannot praise the conquerors, unless we give due honour to the King Who with His own right hand, and with His holy arm hath gotten Himself the victory. They who have conquered take no honour to themselves. "They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy ways, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, and glorify Thy Name? For Thou only art holy."

He only is holy. He alone can claim to bear that title of Saint by virtue of inherent Saintliness. They, so far as they are holy, are holy by virtue of His righteousness which He has put upon them. We praise Him therefore to-day, First and Last, the Author, Sustainer, and Finisher of all holiness; Him First, and all in Him; Him the Head, them

the Body ; Him the Life, them drawing that Life from Him, forming the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Of this Church we, Brethren, are members. And now let us consider our interest in Him, and with Him in them whose faith we praise to-day. When the Creator had placed Adam in Paradise, He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help meet for him." In the woman taken from the side of Adam we see the type of the Church drawing her life from the opened side of the second Adam. He, as Man, thought it was not good that He should be alone. He therefore created for Himself the Church to be His Spouse. She was to be for Him the Mother of holy souls, the Mother of His children Who is the Father of the everlasting age. Christ is the heavenly Bridegroom; the Church is His Bride. In earthly things and in heavenly things, for the flesh and for the Spirit, He has sanctified bonds of visible and invisible union, making husband and wife to be one flesh, making the saint and his Saviour to be one spirit. We are all members of one Body, every one members one of another, and all complete in Him. We do not stand entirely alone. In one sense every man shall bear his own burden ; every one, by himself and for himself, respon-

sible to his Judge. But we believe in the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints. We are not alone then. We are one with Patriarchs and Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Teachers and Laymen, Martyrs and Confessors. We are all baptized by the one Baptism for the remission of sins into one Christ. We have all eaten the same spiritual Meat, we have all drunk the same spiritual Drink, the Body and Blood of a Crucified and Ascended Lord. The record of their sufferings and their victory is ours, and it cheers us. Their prayers, which they offered when on earth for the whole Church, looked prospectively forward to our day; and in proportion as they are answered so are we blessed. As they now, beneath the Altar cry, "How long, O Lord?" so these their prayers win a blessing for the toiling Church on earth. We are taught to draw from this precious doctrine all the comfort and support which the assurance of sympathy supplies. As you may picture to yourself an army on its march covering many miles of ground; and as if one looked down from a mountain's top he would see different portions of it in different stages of the road, till perhaps the vanguard was utterly lost in the distance, and had become invisible, and yet all in front knew that the rest were following, and all behind knew that the rest were only gone

before ; and all have but one common object, and all press on to one common goal, so is the Communion of Saints. Christians make one large army, marching ever onward to their heavenly home. Some whom the world calls dead are not dead but gone before. They are out of our sight, but that is all. They had, and still have, the same object. And if they have come within sight of it while we are still toiling along the earlier stages of the road this does not deaden their sympathies with us. The Lord's kingdom has not come. They without us cannot be made perfect. Their very waiting assures us that we too are of that same goodly company, that we too, if we shall be followers of them as they were of Christ, shall reach that land that is very far off, to which we hasten with longing eyes and weary feet that we may behold the King in His beauty.*

They are not separated from us by any long period of time. For day by day the King of Saints has been gathering His own elect into His bosom. Our own departed ones are among them. Parents, and husband and wife, and brothers and sisters, and children, are gone before, and we shall soon follow. We ought not to say, in the strict sense of the word, that we are separated from them ; for we are not sure that they may not see us, watching from above. Holy Scripture tells

* Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

us plainly that we are compassed about with a great crowd of witnesses. Not merely witnesses in their earthly life to the faith and obedience of Christ; for then the words "compassed about" would be out of place. But witnesses, standing around us, compassing us about as the spectators in the amphitheatre, watching our wrestling, our blows, our running in the strife and the race that is set before us. "To die is gain," said St. Paul. But how gain, except to live nearer Christ, to see more of Him, to understand more of His mysterious workings for the furtherance of His kingdom? Never let us dare to think of them except as alive in a more energetic, more fully conscious, life, in comparison with which this life of ours in the flesh is barred up within narrowest limits. We have no definition of their capabilities given us in Scripture. It is enough to know that our departed ones who sleep in Jesus are happy in a happiness to which only perfection is not yet given.

Our encouragement then is this, that as they overcame we too may overcome. The same King of Saints is their and our Lord, receiving at this moment their and our worship. In His life they live. By His Resurrection they will arise. Will He not give us to overcome like them, if we will only put our whole trust in Him?

And so we come down again to earth, to

the duties of those who are called to be saints, to the mutual love and peace and joy, and bearing one another's burdens, which ought to set forth their faith, and God's glory, upon earth. For of necessity these things follow from belief in the Communion of Saints, even loving sympathy with all who are knit together with us in the fellowship of the Saints in Christ, a reaching forward of heart and will towards all, work for all, prayer for all. By ourselves we are imperfect. St. Paul desires that his friends may "be able to comprehend *with all saints*, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God."^y Only with all saints can we attain to this.

To-day, then, the thought of the perfection of our individual life is for a little while lost in the consideration of that great Body in which we are but units. And yet the value of each single soul is not thereby underrated. The very idea of a body implies that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it. So here. We pray that the Lord will shortly accomplish the number of His elect, and hasten His kingdom. If any one fall back there must be delay. If any one fall away altogether that kingdom cannot come until the vacant post be occupied. The guests

^y Eph. iii. 18, 19.

at the marriage supper of the Lamb cannot sit down until the house be *filled*. What if we be found wanting when we are called to our account? What if by our disobedience, worldliness, coldness, sin (to whatever kind we are most prone) we hinder Him in His mighty work, as the men of Capernaum, who rendered it impossible for Him to do many mighty works there because of their unbelief? Every soul saved is a gain to Christ, a gain to His Church, a gain to every other soul which is pressing forward. Every soul lost is a loss to all.

My Brethren, we are called to be saints. We *are* saints in the sense in which St. Paul addressed his disciples. It is for us to hold fast that which we have that no man take our crown.* We are fellow-citizens of the Saints, and of the household of God. For a little while we are strangers and pilgrims upon this earth, seeking a better country, that is, an heavenly. Let us declare this to the world, to angels, and to men, by our lips and in our lives. By the glory of the Holy Church, by the Communion with all Saints gone before us, struggling by our sides, or to succeed us, by the tender sympathy and ministrations of the Holy Angels, by the unspeakable and wonderful love of the King of Saints, I beseech you, live as believing and realizing to the full the blessedness of

* Rev. iii. 11.

this day, that you too, may, in the great day, rejoice to find your names written in heaven, that belief in communion may be succeeded by a visible union in which husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, friend and friend, shall be reunited once and for ever in Him ; for all will then be one in Christ Jesus.

SERMON XI.

Family Godliness.

(Preached November 17th, 1861.)

“A devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house.”—Acts x. 2.

THIS is the character which the Holy Spirit has left us of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, with this addition, that “he gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”

I do not intend to-day to speak of the conversion of Cornelius, but of that example of a godly family life which he sets us as being “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.”

When God created Adam He thought it not good for him to be alone. For He had created him to be the parent of the human race, the first of an order of intelligent beings who, deriving their life from him and our

mother Eve, should be linked together by the ties of blood. As men multiplied upon earth a new bond of common interest was formed, the bond of common nationality. To this was added the bond of a common religion, true as in the case of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, false as among the rest of Adam's children. All things, from man's perversity, turned to separation. When Christ came, it was to change this separation into union, to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. From the One Father in heaven every family, all Fatherhood, in heaven and earth is named. All His children are knit together, one family, in the Church, the Spouse of Christ.^a He was made flesh and dwelt among us, in us, in our human nature, being made partaker of flesh and blood, that all men, Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, being baptized into Christ, might put on Christ, and be made members of His family, of His Church, and of Himself. God has, as the Scriptures tell us, made all men of one blood, children of the same parent, dependent upon each other for almost everything which they enjoy, for their being, for their happiness in life, for the knowledge of the hope of glory, and for the outward means of grace. Moreover God regards men, and teaches them to regard themselves, as mem-

^a St. John xi. 52; Eph. iii. 15.

bers one of another in (1) His Church, universal and without limit of place or language; (2) in their nation; and, (3) more closely still, in their family.

Now I think that in the first of these three bonds of union we are all most willing to acknowledge God's special Providence. Christians are the Body, as Christ is the Head, of the Church. We are anxious perhaps about a point of doctrine, about the settlement of a religious dispute, about the success of missionary enterprise abroad or the development of the Church's energies at home; and we pray heartily for the good estate of the Catholick Church. And so at all times, and especially in times of peril and calamity, of war, pestilence, and famine, we pray for our nation. We think, and speak, of ourselves, not without reason, as a highly favoured nation. We are proud of calling ourselves Englishmen. But we do not, as it appears to me, pay sufficient attention to the third bond of union in the family and household as it stands before God, and to all that is bound up in that word *family*, husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants. We do not think sufficiently of its importance, its sacredness, its responsibilities, its oneness. Among the many inscriptions of praise placed over the graves of departed Christians did we ever see the words of our text, "A devout man, and

one that feared God with all his house?" There are individual duties of each towards the other members of the family. There are common duties of all towards God, a Christian service demanded from the household, as a united whole, as one body, in the same sense as the Church, and the nation, are one in our own view, and in the sight of God.

I wish then to speak to you to-day of Christian family life. We all understand that there ought to be but one interest in a family. Wherever this is not the case, whenever members of the same family are seen to be divided among themselves, opposing and injuring each other, we call it *unnatural*. The simplest sense of right and wrong teaches that parents are bound to provide for their children, and that the children again are bound to reverence and honour their parents, to follow their wishes, to take care of them in sickness and old age; that brothers and sisters should mutually help each other on in the world as opportunities offer. And why? Because they are all members of one family, children of one father. Respect, gratitude, love to the parents, find their expression in love to the children. All this is only right, a duty so simple that we do not acknowledge it as a merit, and never fail to be shocked if it is neglected. God has ordered that it should be so. The Creator has implanted this natural affection in our hearts.

Now if we feel thus in the matters of ~~this~~ world should we not feel the same and even more in matters affecting eternal life and death? If a father will devote a lifetime working early and late to provide for wife and children, to make a fortune for them after his death, surely he ought to be equally careful for their spiritual riches and progress, that he may keep around him in life, and leave behind him at death, a household high in favour with the Almighty. That the Lord does regard households and families with a peculiar affection is evident from numerous instances in Scripture. Observe how often He declares Himself as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of your fathers; the God of Israel."^b Observe how God speaks of Abraham, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord," giving this holiness in Abraham's family life as the reason for bestowing upon him a special revelation of His purposes. Observe how Jacob entreats Him as the God of His family, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac."^c Remember how it is recorded that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus."^d Then, again, God gave specific commands for the union of the family in distinct acts of wor-

^b Exod. iii. 6, 13, 15, 16; iv. 5. ^c Gen. xviii. 19; Gen. xxxii. 9.

^d St. John xi. 5.

ship. The Sabbath day was to be kept holy by son and daughter, by manservant and maidservant, by the stranger sojourning or serving in the household, as well as by the heads of the family. The sprinkling of the blood of the lamb at the Passover in Egypt was the pledge of salvation to the household. The lamb was ordered to be eaten before the Lord by the Master with his household. He declares Himself "the God of all the families of Israel;"^e and it is one of His great blessings upon mankind that "He helpeth the poor out of misery, and maketh Him households like a flock of sheep."

Moreover our Father Which is in heaven gave various commandments with a view to the preservation of holiness in family life. Parents are required to teach their children, and their children's children. Children are commanded to honour their father and their mother, that their days may be long in the land which the Lord their God giveth them. National prosperity is intimately connected with obedience to authority. If the Jewish children had honoured their fathers and their mothers we cannot doubt but that the nation would have enjoyed the fulfilment of the promise of the fifth commandment, would have retained the Divine blessing, and have dwelt long in the land which the Lord their God had given them.

^e Jer. xxxi. 1.

^f Psalm cvii. 41.

But they disregarded the command to ~~their~~ great loss. The Lord Jesus condemns them for having made it of none effect by their tradition. The breaking up of family life was ruining the nation, and bringing down God's heavy anger. The prophets had foreseen this long since. The Old Testament closes with the prediction that the forerunner of the Lord would come especially to remedy this evil: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."^s What does this mean except that unloving and disobedient hearts within the household kindle God's anger against a nation? that holy and loving homes are of His ordering for the salvation of a nation in the day of visitation and judgment?

Again, we have many remarkable instances of the divine favour and protection extended to whole families. God would not save Noah alone. Wife, and sons, and sons' wives, were saved with him. He would not save Lot alone. The angels would have brought his wife, his sons, sons-in-law, and daughters, safe out of the doomed city into a place of refuge. By the faith of Rahab the harlot her father's household, and all that she had, were saved. So Obed-edom was blessed in his care of the Ark of the Lord, and not he only, but all

^s Mal. iv. 6.

his household. The promise to Abraham was that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. Especially must we remember that the Church of Christ is spoken of as the household, and the family, of God.

Next, let us consider the frequency with which instances of family religion are mentioned in the sacred writings. There is Joshua's resolve, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."^h Then there is David's rule, in the hundred-and-first Psalm, for the ordering of his household; "I will walk in my house with a perfect heart. There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house. Whoso leadeth a godly life he shall be my servant." There is Cornelius, "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house." Further, it is related of many of the converts that "himself believed and his whole house." The Philippian jailor was baptized, he and all his, and rejoiced, "believing on God with all his house."ⁱ Nor should St. Paul's greetings and salutations be forgotten in which with all affectionate remembrance he mentions heads of families, and their households as well.

We are bound, therefore, my Brethren, if we have any faith in Scripture warnings, examples, promises, and commendation, to think of ourselves very seriously, and of the duties required of us, as members of the

^h Joshua xxiv. 15.

ⁱ Acts xvi. 34.

family into which we are born, or in which we are now placed by God's Providence. We may not adopt Cain's words: "Am I my brother's keeper?" or the selfish language of the world's motto, "Every man for himself." We are in duty bound to consider the welfare of all the members of our own family in temporal and in spiritual things. And in spiritual things, of course, even more than in temporal. For the care of the body ends at the grave. When sickness has done its work, when death has separated soul and body, and you take your last look, consider, I pray you, what advantages now remain to the departed of all your strivings after his worldly advancement. You have done him no lasting benefit in all this. It does not profit him that you carry him to burial with the pomp of a costly funeral, that you place over him a marble monument telling of many virtues. His bones would rest as peacefully in the plainest coffin, and in an unknown grave. But what of his soul, that is, what of himself? Oh! Father, Mother, Brother, or Sister, or Child, of him whom you so lately followed to his burial, what has your relationship done for his eternal salvation? Your labour is ended now. And perhaps in labouring for the meat that perisheth you have only thrown a stumbling-block in his way, multiplied temptations, and drawn him away from grace.

We, Brethren, who are called upon to minister to the sick for their spiritual necessities have opportunities of observing how greatly zeal for the body exceeds zeal for the soul. At the first appearance of illness the advice of the doctor is eagerly sought. The medicine is regularly administered, the directions scrupulously observed. But when we, the messengers of the Great Physician of souls, have at last, perhaps quite accidentally, heard of the sick man's state, and apply for admittance to his bedside that we may speak to him of his soul, of God's love in Christ, and the things of the world to come, that we may urge him to repentance of past sin, and resolutions of future holiness, we do not always find that welcome, and that attention to our message which its importance demands. For the sake of a little more bodily rest, for fear of causing the patient anxiety, the friends or the nurse will refrain from sending for us; or will refuse to admit us; or will desire us to speak only a very little about God's marvelous and infinite love to the penitent, and fearful threatenings upon the impenitent. Is not this a mistake, a false love which puts the soul in danger of eternal death for the sake of the comfort of the body? Is it not an entire ignorance of the nature of true family love?

All men, as sharing one common human nature, and, therefore, much more as members of the same family, are to a certain ex-

tent their brothers' keepers, answerable for each others souls, each as far as his own influence extends. This influence is very great, far greater than we are at first inclined to imagine. It is an influence of authority on the part of parents and elders. It is an influence of perpetual example, and of opinion expressed in word and act. It is the influence of the many over one, a sort of lesser public opinion, a smaller world to which all are compelled, to a great extent, to conform.

Let me therefore now speak to Fathers and Mothers, as the heads of households, about this influence, and what it ought to be. Are you, like Abraham, commanding your children and your household after you that they shall keep the way of the Lord? Are you anxious that there should be, so to speak, a mark upon your houses, as if the cross, signed at baptism upon the temple of your body, were standing high upon your roof to proclaim to the world that your house is a house of God? Do you take pains so to order all its arrangements that men may say, "This house is the home of a Christian, and a godly, man? He is very particular who enters it. He will not admit any person of bad character within his doors. He will never allow any bad language. He is regular at Church with his wife and family. He gathers them round him daily for family prayer. He is a

devout man, and fears God, with all his house." I hope and believe there are many such among this congregation, men and women who are not content to make religion a merely personal matter between God and their own souls, but do their best that every member of their household may be learning some good every day, and walking more and more carefully in the fear of the Lord. You who are trying to effect this can bear witness whether a godly household is not also a happy one, as that household at Nazareth must have been, where Jesus dwelt with Joseph and Mary, and was subject unto them.

But, remember, this family holiness cannot exist without personal holiness in all its members, especially in those who are the very head and heart of its being. There are mutual duties to be fulfilled by one to the other. The first of these is example from parent to child.

It is unnecessary for me to tell you that a family cannot be holy if the parents care nothing for holiness in their acts. They must shew by their life that they are in earnest, that they will not on any account allow bad conduct, or bad words, in those under their authority. They must show that their resolution is fixed by the example they set of avoiding everything forbidden by God's laws. It is of no use for the child to learn his catechism at school, with his duty to God and his neighbour, if he finds his parents deny-

ing God in their actions, and daily breaking His commandments. Parents must not complain that school-teaching fails when they make their children unlearn and despise at home all that they have learned at school. Only let the child see that the parent hates sin, and he will believe his teaching at school and at church, he will hate evil and love good.

Furthermore, this personal holiness must manifest itself towards all other members of the family, and so teach them by example as well as by precept. There are mutual duties between husband and wife by which each may be brought nearer to God. Christianity has elevated the union of man and woman, declaring that Christian marriage is a great mystery, signifying the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church. How pure, how blessed, is this union between two persons who feel what Christian marriage really is! The wife reverences her husband. The husband dwells with his wife according to knowledge, that is, knowing that each has been redeemed by the Blood of Christ, that each is a Temple of the Holy Ghost, giving honour unto her as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that their prayers may not be hindered by any sin.^k

But if, unhappily, as is sometimes the case,

^k 1 St. Peter iii. 7.

either husband or wife should be unbelieving, in danger of falling away, or slothful in serving the Lord, this union gives great opportunities to the other of leading the wanderer back to God. "What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou mayest save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" So writes St. Paul. And St. Peter, writing to the wives, enjoins them to be in subjection to their own husbands, "that if any obey not the word they also may without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives."¹

Then, with the children? How are you bringing up the little ones whom God has given you? Are you training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? You cannot be doing so unless you are striving your best to make your whole household holy. I spoke just now of example. The practice of home is to the child's soul like the air he breathes. His spiritual life cannot grow up holy in a corrupt atmosphere. He will catch some disease, and his soul will pine away. You would be very, very, anxious if you saw his body growing daily weaker. Be as anxious about his soul. Children are the gift of the Lord. The baptized child is especially the gift of, or more correctly, the thing lent by, Jesus. Washed in His Blood, signed with His Cross, he is a temple of the

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 16; 1 St. Peter iii. 1.

Holy Ghost, a holy thing born of God to bring the blessing of heaven upon you. Watch over him. Keep all evil far from him. Think of the joy and comfort of your dying hour in the knowledge that you have brought up your children to love Christ, that they are persevering steadfast in the faith, becoming in their turn the parents of faithful children, "a godly seed."^m

And if, as does sometimes happen to the parents' unspeakable sorrow, a son or a daughter has gone wrong, disgracing themselves and their family, what an addition to your sorrow there would be in the remembrance that you had never taught them to discern between good and evil, to flee from evil and do the thing that was right, that there had been no good seed planted in their heart which might some day, by God's mercy and grace, lead them to repentance, and that the blood of their souls must lie at your door! What consolation and hope, on the contrary, in the thought that you had done all in your power to lead them in the right path, that you have delivered your own soul, and that perhaps, some day, the old teaching will bear good fruit! A man or woman may fall very deeply, and for very long. Yet you must many of you have known instances in which the old teaching, the remembrance of a godly home with its calm and holy happiness, has

^m Mal. ii. 15. .

brought back the prodigal, at least to die penitently, if not to live hopefully, in renewed purpose of serving his offended God.

Here is another matter in which the reality of family godliness is shewn, the advice which parents give their children on the subject of marriage. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," said St. Paul.^a Now a marriage founded upon a passing fancy, merely upon personal beauty, or talent, or money, or position, is certainly an unequal yoke. And parents who encourage a marriage with one who is careless about religion are admitting this carelessness not only into their house but into their hearts. They are putting their child into a position where zeal for God's service is likely to be chilled, where love for God is likely to be drawn away downwards to the things of earth. There is a new element in the household; and those who have never cared for their own souls are not likely to be anxious about the soul of even husband, or wife, or child.

Besides those who are knit together by the ties of kindred there are others in the household who must not be forgotten. The heads of families are required by God to consider their servants. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."^o You give the beast of burden, and the dog that

^a 2 Cor. vi. 14.

^o Col. iv. 1.

guards your house, whatever is necessary for the support of life. Give to your servants, whose mind and body both work for you, and to whose care you commit your children, give to them the food necessary for body and soul. Beware of putting any stumbling-block, or occasion of falling, in their way. See that they have opportunities of going to Church. Do not cut them off from the Holy Communion by never allowing them to go to Church in the morning, or to stay through the whole Service. For if you do, their neglect and loss of the means of grace comes back upon you. And, when you can, teach them and help them.

You will understand that in a single sermon it is impossible to enter into all the little details of family religion, to speak of all the duties owed by children to their parents, or of the mutual duties of brothers and sisters to each other. Yet on this latter point I cannot refrain from reminding brothers and sisters that they are required to be mutually gentle, forbearing, considerate, and polite. Relationship does not by any means excuse rudeness, or selfishness, though too many act as if it did. And when they are parted one from another they may still strive together in mutual intercession, each praying that the Divine protection may ever be over the rest, that the Holy Spirit may ever guide and keep them in the way of holiness. Neither

can we attempt to mention all the ways in which "the devout man who fears God with all his house," lets his Christian principle be seen in the government of his family. A great part of his life must be secret, or known only to those who live in close intercourse with him. Yet in some things that life will bear open testimony. And of that testimony none is more sweet and comforting to the ministers of God than the sight of a whole family, Father, Mother, Children, and Servants, worshipping together in the House of God, and kneeling side by side at His Altar to receive from us the Body and Blood of their Crucified Saviour. None is more sweet now. And among the remembrances of earth few will be more sweet for us in the world to come than the sight of the same household united together, not one missing, at the Lord's right hand at the great day; none more sweet to you than to be able to say, "Lord, behold I, and the children whom Thou hast given me!"^p and to find grace with Him, as did Cornelius, for having feared the Lord with all your house. Therefore, my Brethren, lay to heart the necessity of family godliness, as well as of personal godliness. I have endeavoured to shew you how highly God regards it, how great blessings He attaches to it both for this world and the next, and how much the spiritual health of the

various members of the family depends upon its head. Let every master of a family make Joshua's resolution his own, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Let him make it not the least among his aims to be known to God, and to men, as Cornelius was known, as "a devout man, and one that fears God with all his house."

SERMON XII.

The Fragments that Remain.

(Preached 25th Sunday after Trinity, 1860.)

“Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost.”—St. John vi. 12.

IN these words the Lord Jesus gave the final instructions to His disciples, after having fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves and two small fishes. “Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.”

The miracle itself was a work of Creative power. The care for the fasting and fainting multitude was proof of tender sympathy. He would not send them away fasting lest they should faint by the way; for He knew that many of them came from afar. But we will to-day pass over the earlier circum-

stances of the miracle. We shall find enough, and more than enough for attentive consideration in the words of our text.

We are struck first by the richness and abundance of the Lord's bounty, its unnecessary superabundance, if we might dare to make use of the expression. Twelve large baskets full remained over and above unto them that had eaten. It would have been easy for Him to proportion His gift exactly to their necessities. But He chooses thus to manifest "the riches of His goodness" in temporal things in order to teach mankind that in spiritual things He is equally bountiful. In the kingdom of nature, and in the kingdom of grace equally, the goodness of our loving Creator far surpasses our actual necessities. His earth brings forth far more than men require for the mere sustenance of life. And the goodness of God has not deemed usefulness complete except when united with beauty, while in all things the limit of sufficiency is far exceeded by a seeming prodigality in Creation. The Almighty mercy which is over all His works has made joy even for His lower creatures in vast tracts of country untrodden hitherto by the foot of man, glorious in the richness and variety of foliage, and teeming with animal life. Truly it is "with lavish kindness" that the gifts of God are strewn. Yet they are neither lost, nor in vain, to any who will

ponder these things, and in patient study of His works learn the loving-kindness of the Lord. He Who has made His perishing works so glorious, being unchangeable, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," will pour upon His children the gifts of His grace with the same fulness. That which the Lord Jesus spoke concerning Himself may be interpreted as referring to all the children of God, that "the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto them." Of His *fulness* have we all received. It is true in every sense that the hired servants in our Father's house have bread enough, and to spare; that, although millions of His redeemed have entered into the halls of the marriage supper of the Lamb, yet there is room. He is more anxious for our happiness than we are for His glory. If He contented Himself with simple justice towards us how could we hope to escape perishing with hunger? Not only in our common corruption have we taken the portion of goods which falleth to us, and squandered it in sin, but by our own misdeeds each one of us, receiving grace from Him, has received that grace again and again in vain. Once to know Him ought to have been enough for us. Once to have been recalled should have been more than enough. And yet how often has He forgiven! How often has He recalled us! How often blessed us with fresh outpourings of the grace we

have repeatedly misused, until it would seem next to impossible to exhaust it and to sin it all away!

Thus by His own example He declares to us the glory of a generous spirit. Thus in His miracle He declares its reward. Five barley loaves and two small fishes, the little store of a poor lad, and very far from enough to fill one such basket, offered in faith and love to the Lord are made by His word more than sufficient for the wants of the multitude, and now twelve baskets full are gathered up. Herein we see the realization of the wise king's saying, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth."^a For the increase and wealth of body and soul result only from His blessing, by which the distributing to the necessities of the Saints becomes, if we could only believe it, the source of riches more enduring than those of earth.

We observe, however, that this bountiful goodness of the Son of God is accompanied with a warning against waste. By His command that the fragments should be gathered up He conveys a lesson to all who might abuse His bounty. Though He gives lavishly He requires from every man an account of that which has been received. While nothing is too great for Him to give nothing is too small for His care. He will not permit waste

^a Prov. xi. 24.

or destruction. He made everything for its purpose, and everything must be used accordingly. To men He has given His only Son to die, He has given His Holy Spirit to shed light and love. To men He has given also the good things of the material world, gifts, yet as gifts to stewards of whom it is required that they be found faithful. We, therefore, after this example, are not only called to give out of our abundance, in case we are blessed with affluence. We are further cautioned against losing by negligence and waste that residue of good things which would, however despised by us, carry life and joy to our starving and shivering fellow-creatures. The miracle declares the secret of God's way of giving, that He is always generous yet never wasteful, requiring His servants to gather up the fragments after the multitude were filled that His good gifts may continue to benefit the needy. God is not too great for little things. Not one sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. The very hairs of our head are all numbered before Him. He provideth food for all flesh, not for man alone. Who then would be so foolish as to think that we should forfeit our dignity if in the enjoyment of our heavenly Father's bounty we meditate thankfully upon the infinite wisdom and love and power which provides our daily bread, and so much more, if we are careful that nothing be lost,

if we spare a little here and there in order that others may partake of the bounties bestowed upon us from above?

And so we are brought to recognize the importance of little things. It was but a little from which so many were fed, from which so great a residue was gathered up. The twelve baskets full were designed to supply food to many others, and might have become under the Lord's blessing the food of thousands more. Unhappily we are too apt to despise the day of small things, forgetting that trifles make the sum of daily life. The rich man took no account of the crumbs which fell from his table; but they served to keep the suffering Lazarus alive. This is not the fault of the wealthy only. Many a poor man has with equal error despised the little which God has given Him, as if it were far too insignificant to be employed for his benefit in either world. But, really, before the Eye of God, nothing is little, nothing insignificant, nothing contemptible. Every man has his place, and his work, under God's providence. Everything which a man possesses is a talent, an opportunity, be it wealth or poverty, health or sickness, society or loneliness, prosperity or adversity. The Lord's voice says of each, "Let nothing of these My gifts be lost, however they have been misapplied hitherto, misapplied until they have been wasted and almost destroyed." Though

only a few scattered fragments remain to us of that which was originally given for our salvation, however little time or power remains, let nothing be lost. Gather up the fragments, and employ them for the glory of the Lord, for the salvation of your own and others' souls.

We are too feeble of sight to foresee or distinguish all the great consequences of little things. A single word may be the seed of some one's salvation. A single word may successfully tempt a soul into departure from God. If we could trace the progress of our own spiritual life we should find, I doubt not, that little things have more to do with that progress than we have been used to think. "The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."^r The progress has been gradual, perhaps slow. Little opportunities have been seized, and unconsciously gathered up, until becoming more frequent, and more important in their effects, they have led on to a habit of holier living. Or, on the other hand, little opportunities have been neglected, and one by one idle and evil habits crept in, and so the soul grew stagnant and dead. The servant to whom ten talents were entrusted did his Master's will, and earned a reward. But he to whom one talent only

^r Prov. iv. 16.

was entrusted, neglected his opportunities, and was punished for his contempt of small things. Although we fear that our service is too little to be worthy Him, let us render it nevertheless. He will not suffer it to be lost. The two mites of the poor widow were more in the eyes of the Lord than the abundance cast in by the rich.

The same rule will hold good in those little acts of service which we are enabled and permitted to offer to our needy brothers and sisters. However limited our means and opportunities we surely can all do something. Assistance, advice, sympathy, may be bestowed, to a greater or less degree. Whatever is given in His Name, be it only a cup of cold water, shall in no wise lose its reward. For the Lord judgeth according to that a man has, not according to that he has not. At any rate, intercessory prayer is within the power of all, even the youngest child, to give; and who will venture to limit the effect of prayer? It must do good; if not to those for whom it is offered, yet at least bringing us near to God it will benefit us who offer it, returning back with blessing into our own bosom. So we shall have our reward.

And then, to apply the words of the text to our own lives; how shall we learn to value little things aright, and gathering up the fragments that remain treasure them to our own profit? Perhaps our present life is but

the scattered fragments of a better past. God only knows the secrets of our hearts, how often we shatter the new creation of God, created anew after the image of His dear Son. There may have been times in our life when we have felt that all was lost. Then the enemy of our souls was tempting us to despair. Yet these words of the Lord Jesus will inspire us with new courage. That nothing be lost! He Who was so careful of the broken meat of earthly elements will not lightly suffer that soul to be lost which He has created for His glory, and for which He has died upon the Cross. The mirror which once reflected His image is dashed in pieces. He bids us repair the mischief. He helps us to do so, to recall the memories of our better self, our old faith in Him, our old abhorrence of evil, our old conviction that He is the chiefest and the only good. Awakening the heart to the sense of its loss He can convert it to Himself. His Holy Spirit gathers together one by one the former holy affections, until that which a little while ago seemed wasted, broken, useless, and lost for ever, is by His care recovered and restored.

Or again, if our former life has never suffered thus, if His work in us has never been so wholly injured, still we cannot answer Him as regards all His gifts. We dare not say that they have been employed as His disciples employed the five loaves and two fishes,

to the blessing of thousands, and the enriching of ourselves. His lesser gifts have been lost because we undervalued them. His greater gifts have remained unemployed because we feared to wield them, lest we should offend by presumption, or sink under the heavy responsibility. Unfaithful stewards, and unprofitable servants, we have left our work undone, and hidden our talent in the earth. Most of all in the retrospect of past years we must dread the guilt of time wasted, misemployed, and lost. That is the talent common to us all, which we have all misused. How shall we gather up the fragments? How redeem the time? It will be more than sufficient difficulty to employ the future aright. And that future—where is it? Shall we ever have it to employ?

This appears to be the last, and the summary of the lessons of to-day's Gospel. The end of the year is approaching. We are so much nearer death, so much nearer the end of the world and the Lord's coming, so much nearer judgment. That which remains to us is but a fragment of time and grace. And the end of the Church's year has already arrived. Next week we turn back to begin her Calendar of Sundays afresh. Sunday after Sunday the Church's Services have led us on from the Lord's cradle at Bethlehem to His empty tomb, and the hill of the Ascension. She has taught us how to live that

through the grave and gate of death, we might pass to our joyful resurrection. We remember the great things we have heard, and mourn to think how little we have progressed, if we have progressed at all. But woe to us, if we rest in vain musings, wringing our hands in idle regrets! We must go forward. Again we shall hear of the coming of the Lord; again be exhorted to prepare ourselves to meet Him. We must gather up the fragments that remain. They may be happy memories of the Bread of Life and the Living Water, of help and comfort supplied, of His abiding Presence, of victory and progress. Gather them up. Treasure them as earnest of fuller supplies of heavenly food, of larger help and comfort, of the continuance of His Presence, of other victories and further progress. Or they may be bitter memories of temptations, and cowardice, of treachery and defeat, of sadness, and loneliness, of presumption and denial of Jesus. Gather them up, yes, even these memories of your falls; lest you forget where you are, and how much you have to recover. There remains a great work to be done, and the time is short. Yet time enough, and more than enough, will be granted. Let "the time past suffice" for wavering and desertion, for idle pleasures, and sinful self-indulgence. He Who is ever merciful would have nothing

lost, least of all the souls of His creation which He died to redeem. It is for us to entreat His help; and then, gathering up the fragments of aught that is good and loving in our past lives, gathering up every good impulse, every holy desire, gathering up every opportunity which He may hereafter give us, to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling."* However little we possess of any of these good gifts, we have at least as much time as the penitent thief had, who dying on the cross believed and received mercy. The fragment of his life, the last and least, was rescued and offered to his Lord, to his eternal gain. We, Brethren, are living in full knowledge, in full privileges. Let us only make due use of them. A week spent in calm examination of the past, in prayer and resolution for the future, will be no bad preparation for the Advent of another Christian year. There we have, as it were, a fresh starting place. Happy we! if by a true repentance we shall obtain from Him pardon and peace that we may serve Him with a quiet mind. Happy we! if we can so employ the remaining years of our lives that nothing of His grace be lost by us, that none of us be lost at that day, but that kept by His Name here we may at last be gathered into that one flock where the Great

* 1 Phil. ii. 12.

Shepherd shall feed His sheep for ever in the green pastures, and give them ever to drink of the Water of Life.

SERMON XIII.

Christ, the Bond of Union to His People.

A FAREWELL SERMON.

(*Preached on Sunday Evening, June 12th, 1864.*)

“There is neither Jew nor Greek : there is neither bond nor free ; there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”—Galations iii. 28.

It has been said that order is heaven's first law, and we can well understand it. For heaven is the place where One perfectly wise and mighty Mind orders all things, and where all things are obedient to that Divine ordering. There is seen no hindrance or harming of another's work, no diversity of interests, no strife of purposes. But all, obedient to the one will of God which is beloved and adored by all, work together in one glorious harmony, order, and union. For God is all, and in all. This, therefore, is the perfection of life in heaven, that perfect union reigns there producing perfect order, without one

single restless, selfish, rebellious, will setting itself against the Supreme Will, or separating itself from its fellows. This, too, is the perfection, the glory, and blessedness of the Divine existence, that the Ever-blessed Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, are ever One in the decrees of their eternal counsels, One in the execution of their amazing works. God is One; and in heaven all angels and arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim, and all the glorious creatures who dwell above with God, are but as one in their love and obedience to Him, in their love and fellowship with each other.

So it should have been upon earth. The one counsel of God planned all things. The one will of God called them all into being. All were good, then, for all declared His glory; all served Him; all were in their place, and for a time fulfilled their purpose. But when sin entered into the world it brought a change. The world was broken, disordered, confused, ruined. By sin man separated himself from God. Disorder and confusion took possession of his nature, and soon extended themselves into all those things over which he had dominion. For his sake the earth was cursed, and brought forth thorns and briers. For his sake the whole creation groaned and travailed in pain together. A separate will was working in

each, now that they were cut away from the one Will which alone could order all things in wisdom and harmony. Then man, having sinned against God in one offence, fell away very far from Him, desiring those things which God had forbidden, hating those things which God had commanded. God's Holy Spirit, Who had once guided the submissive heart of the unfallen Adam, now strove, and strove in vain, with the rebellious, defiant, hearts of generation after generation. And just as passion arrayed itself against passion within the soul, so man arrayed himself against man in the world. None enquired after the place which God designed for him. None sought how he ought to walk, and to please God, in the vocation with which he was called, walking with God. Each sought, rather, how he might please himself, taking his fill of pleasure. Men forgot that God had made them all of one blood, that they were all members one of another, children of that One Father of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Cruelty and oppression spread over the whole earth. The lesson of righteous vengeance upon iniquity taught by the flood was soon forgotten. As soon as men multiplied again upon the earth they divided themselves into nations, having separate interests, holding different creeds, and worshipping many gods in strange and varied worship. The fortune of war, the

many changes and chances of this mortal life, placed their barriers between rich and poor. The prisoner and the needy became the bondsmen of the conqueror and the affluent. The weakness of the woman rendered her, too often, little better than the slave, or the plaything, of the man. Thus when the Son of God came into the world He found confusion prevailing where God had created order, division where God had intended union. Mankind were not one, in union, but many, in disunion. For each put himself as it were in the place of God, doing that which was right in his own eyes. Some bond of union must be found, therefore, if this disorder was to be remedied. There must be some gathering together, some knitting in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, if God's work was to be in any degree restored to its original beauty.

Dear Brethren, do not our own hearts witness to this disorder within us, and without? Have we not too much reason to grieve over the sorrows which the wickedness of men inflicts upon their brothers? The pure faith, and the loving laws, of Jesus have not yet so won upon the world as to control and to quell all evil passion. In our own peaceful prosperity we mourn over the slaughter of that civil war which in America is arraying brothers against brothers. We regret scarcely less the war which, though slumbering for

a time, has not yet ceased to threaten Europe. It is not so long ago that we had our own wars, our serious anxieties, our saddened homes. When St. Paul wrote the disorder and separation in the world was even worse. War was more terrible. The sword was less sparing than it is now; the oppression of the conqueror far less merciful. Out of the pride and selfishness of every man's heart a scorn and dislike of his neighbour had grown up. The Jew gloried in his knowledge of the one true God. He boasted that he was Abraham's seed, the inheritor of exceeding great and precious promises. He fondly looked back upon the ancient glories of his nation, and forward to the day when Messiah, the Son of David, should sit upon his Father's throne, and restore the kingdom to Israel. The Greek, and the other Gentile nations who were like the Greek, civilized, educated, and polished, despised the Jew as ignorant and superstitious, as puffed up with empty expectations even while he lay prostrate and a captive at the feet of a Roman viceroy. The Greek despised the bigotry of the Jew. The Jew returned this contempt, as he saw the many idols of the Gentile worship, and contrasted the filthy fables of those false gods with the glorious records of the God of Israel. The Jew gloried in the mark upon his flesh which sealed him to the Almighty as a son and a servant in an unchangeable

covenant for ever. He clung the closer to the rites of a worship which had been paid for fifteen hundred years. On the other hand, the Greek, in his philosophy, his intellectual researches and guesses at truth, his play of fancy, cared not for Creeds, and scarcely thought of worship except as gorgeous pageantry and ceremonial. He peopled earth, and air, and ocean, with bright beings half human, half divine; and in mingled faith and fancy sought to them for favour and for aid. And, if perchance the Gentile bent himself to acknowledge the God of the Jews, not even then was the line of separation obliterated. A partition wall divided him from the Jew in the worship of the temple. He was taught that, in spite of his faith and allegiance to the One True God, he was not really Abraham's seed, that he could never be fully an heir according to the promise.[†]

As there was religious separation throughout the world, so there was also social separation. The Jew had at least learned one truth, namely that the value of a man did not depend altogether upon his possessions and his power. He recognized, or professed to recognize, a brother in every son of Abraham. But, in the heathen world, to be poor, or to be a captive, was almost to be a slave. Worldly wealth, power, magnificence, were the objects of universal worship. The poor,

[†] Gal. iii. 28.

the helpless, and the friendless were despised and oppressed. The great truth that God was no respecter of persons had not been thoroughly learned even by the Jew. It had scarce been thought of by the heathen. The poet, whose words St. Paul quotes, "We too are God's offspring,"^a struck upon this truth indeed; but few had received it; fewer still acted upon it. The pride of every man exalted itself against his neighbour, every one seeking honour for himself. It was forgotten too that God had made the woman to be a helpmeet for the man. Sin had produced selfishness, and selfishness had produced pride, and so division. Men were not one among themselves; they were not one with God. And what wonder therefore if the lot of the poor and desolate was miserable indeed?

When the Son of God came into the world angel voices sang peace on earth, and good-will towards men. As soon as He commenced His ministry He went about preaching peace, and declaring the remedy for this disunion. By His own voice and by His disciples' voice, He taught the world to look forward to the time of the restitution of all things, to the good time when all divisions should cease, and the children of men be brought together in a life where all should be of one mind and one soul, dwelling in perfect love. This, He shewed them, was the work set before Him,

^a Acts xvii. 28.

to restore all things; to gather together in one all things both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; to establish a bond of union between all the children of men among themselves, and between them and Him Who is the Father of all, the Almighty Creator of all. That bond of perfect union, He shewed them, was His Flesh. He being truly God, when He had taken upon Him our nature, united God with man in His own person. This He shewed by His works, by His teaching, by the preaching and writing of His Apostles. But there were other truths to be preached together with the first, that all men are sons of God, and brethren one of another by virtue of their common human nature inherited from Adam who was the son of God created in God's own image; and that, again, by a new and living way, by faith and Sacramental union with Him Who is both God and Man, all men might be united together in Him in an eternal union with each other, and with God, in a better brotherhood, a more glorious and an eternal sonship. Henceforth there should be no more divisions, neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free, male nor female. There was to be one Body, one Spirit, one hope in which all were called, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.^v Men were to be all one in

^v Eph. iv. 4—6.

Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus was to be all, and in them all.

So He sent forth His disciples, declaring that God was no respecter of persons, and that henceforth He made no difference between Jew and Gentile, purifying the hearts of all men by faith in Him; declaring that henceforth neither circumcision nor uncircumcision was anything, but the new creature, the new creation by baptism into Christ Jesus; that in every nation he that feared God, and worked righteousness was accepted of Him; that all were children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. They taught that the bond-servant was made free, being redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ; that the freeman was Christ's slave, as bought with a price, that same price of His most precious Blood. They taught that husband and wife were alike esteemed before God as immortal souls, and as heirs together of the grace of life. They preached this especially, that the glory of man did not depend in the least upon the circumstances of his birth, but that every man might, by union with Christ, the Word made Flesh, be made partaker of the Divine Nature; that all, Jew and Gentile, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, male and female, were children of One Father, in One family, members one of another under Christ their Head. Henceforth earthly separation was nothing. Death was nothing. All

were one in Christ. Christ was all, and in all.

Oh ! most blessed union, as yet imperfectly realized by us, but still in some degree felt and believed, and cherished as a divine fact ! If we are in Christ nothing shall cut us off from communion one with another in the blessed Communion of Saints.

Of that life in Christ St. Paul writes thus to the Colossians, " As ye have therefore received Christ, so walk ye in Him, *rooted* and *built up* in Him, and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."^w The Christian, one in Christ with all his fellow Christians, is to " walk in Christ," to be "rooted in Christ," to be "built up in Christ." We are to "walk in Christ." The phrase is full of meaning. It signifies life, motion, progress, according to His will. To walk in Christ is to hold fast by Him, to walk with Him, to go by the same road, towards the same end, and at the same pace with Him, watching His steps, taking no bye-paths, choosing no companions but such as have the mind of Christ, never idly slumbering, but patiently, resolutely, steadily, pressing forward with Him through all temptations, hindrances, and sorrows, to the joy of the world to come, and the eternal blessedness of His presence. Then, again, the Christian is to be "rooted in Christ." This expression teaches

^w Col. ii. 6, 7.

us of the personal life, the responsibility of each one. The tree of man's planting must strike its roots deep down if it would make strong and vigorous growth. Unless it do this all the care of the planter's hand will fail, all the genial sunshine and refreshing rain will be useless. Let the tree strike its roots deep, deep down, with a multiplied and widely extending grasp, and then it will draw never-failing nourishment from sources which the parching wind cannot dry up, and may defy the storm. We have but a vain knowledge of Christ unless we have received this as one of the first principles of our spiritual life. We must be rooted in Christ. This of course must be our own doing with the help of His grace. I mean, that none other can do this for us. No Church-membership, no fellowship with the purest and wisest, no knowledge of heavenly mysteries, no partaking of the Blessed Sacrament, will stand in the place of this, the growth of each Christian's soul into Christ by love, by meditation, by obedience, by holiness in thought, word, and deed. Take hold of Him by your free and divinely inspired choice, obedient to the drawing of His love. Strengthen your hold upon Him day by day, putting forth the fibres of your heart, the secret energies of your will, drawing invisibly from Him the nourishment of hidden life and spiritual growth.

But this individual life is not all. The Christian is indeed planted into Christ, rooted in Christ, but He is something more, He is "built up" in Him. We pass, in these words, from the idea of the soul's growth and nourishment through its own individual energies to the idea of union with other souls in some vast, and glorious, building. St. Paul is very fond of dwelling upon this thought. He loves to contemplate the Church of Christ as a whole building, vast, and various in its materials, fair and noble in its design, perfect in its unity. He loves to think of each Christian as a stone in that great building, imperfect by himself, perfect in Christ's Church, and in Christ. There is no more separation, he writes to the Galatians, but all are one in Christ. There is no more separation. he writes to the Colossians, in the same words, but with this different conclusion, but Christ is all, and in all. The principle of union is said, you see, in one passage to be our dwelling in Christ; in the other to be Christ's dwelling in us; in both to be the mutual indwelling of Christ and His people. Baptism testifies of the first, planting us in Christ, making us all one in Him. Holy Communion testifies of the second, He thereby giving Himself to all, and being in all. The two texts, enforced as they are by so many others, caution us against separating the two principles. To dwell exclusively upon the

union of the individual soul with Christ, apart from union with the One Body, fosters spiritual pride, self-will, and division. To speak only of the unity of the Body, regardless of the living secret union of each member with the Head, is likely to produce formalism and carelessness. The soul must be in Christ; and Christ, Who is our life, must be in all.

In writing thus to the Colossians concerning the union of the soul with Christ by its own root, and by its place as a living stone in His building, St. Paul assured them of his continual interest in their eternal welfare. He had written in the preceding verse, "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."^x These are words which any pastor of souls may take up, as he contemplates his removal to another scene of labour. There are many expressions of the Apostle which he dares not use, conscious of his many shortcomings. Now that I address you for the last time, dear Brethren, as your own pastor, and look back upon a ministry of four years and a half, I feel more than ever how much need I have to pray God to deliver me from blood-guiltiness, the guilt of the blood of souls. I feel how awful are the threatenings of the great God upon the shep-

^x Col. ii. 5.

herds who fail in their duties. St. Paul could dare to say that he had declared to his disciples "the whole counsel of God, that he had warned every one of them night and day with tears."^y But what an inspired Apostle might venture to say, one who had seen in a vision the Lord Jesus, is not for us. If by my ministry the Lord has brought to any one of you the least instruction, the least comfort, help, encouragement, or correction, to His Name be the praise. For myself, Brethren, (if I may be permitted to speak of myself,) I would say only this, Pray for me, that after I have preached to others I myself may not be a castaway. Pray for me, that wherever I shall be called there the Word of God may have free utterance, and may draw them that hear me to love the Lord Jesus, and to look to Him, and Him alone, for salvation. I have to thank you for much forbearance, for much kindness, for many expressions of confidence and affection. Be sure that when absent in the body I shall be often thinking of you and praying for you, often present among you in spirit. Be sure that I shall rejoice indeed to hear of your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. I trust that you have learned by this time to realize the preciousness of order, and the power of a stedfast faith. The Church of England has appeared to many

^y Acts xx. 27.

too cold in her services. Men complain sometimes of her sameness, as if variety, and novelty, and excitement, were necessary to growth and stedfastness in holiness. But do they not make a great mistake? Not always, perhaps, but in most instances, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The eye cannot easily detect the daily rooting of the tree into the earth, or the gradual progress of the building. My hope among you from the first has been, by using that order which our Church has established, by daily prayer and praise, and by frequent Communions, to help you to realize the power, and life, of the Church's quiet order, and stedfast faith. I have tried, in humble reverence, to carry out the system and order of our Church in their integrity, because I believe with all my heart that God is with her of a truth, that she holds fast to Evangelical truth and Apostolical order, that, whatever her imperfections, she represents more faithfully and exactly than any other religious body the Church of Apostolic times. I believe that as members of the Church of England, baptized by her ministry into Christ, taught by her Catechism and her Prayer-book the truth as it is in Jesus, worshipping with her Liturgy on our lips, receiving at her Altars the spiritual Food of the most precious Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour, we have received Christ, have

been planted into Him, possess grace to be rooted in Him, and built up in Him. I believe that in her Communion we are one with Christ, one with all good and holy souls whom He has loved, in whom He has dwelt, drawing them to Himself. Perhaps it may please the Lord,—who knows?—to grant to our Church the blessed work of reconciling the differences which keep believers apart, to be the rallying centre around which all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity may gather for the defence of the faith once delivered unto the Saints, for the restoration of Catholick unity. Some day, in the next world if not in this, the people of God will be gathered together in one. There will be no party names, no hard words, no coolness in their love, no suspicions nor misunderstandings, not even separation from the face of each other.

Even now we enjoy something of that union which Christ came to establish. Friends separated on earth know that they are still near to each other in Christ. As the prayer of Cornelius at Cæsarea mingled with the prayer of Peter at Joppa before the throne of grace, so the prayers of parted friends, of all God's people, mingle together for the obtaining of His favour for each other as well as for themselves.

And we have other points of union besides.

“’Tis something that we kneel and pray
With loved ones near and far away ;
One Lord, one Faith, one Hope, one Care,
One form of words, one hour of Prayer ;” .

Best of all that we have one Blessed Communion of Christ’s Body and Blood, by which we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us ; by which we are assured that “we are very members incorporate in Christ’s mystical Body, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.”

Dear Brethren, if we believe these words of our text, we shall rest assured that in spite even of the death of the body we shall still stand side by side, present together in spirit, that we are one in Christ Jesus.

God grant that your order, and the steadfastness of your faith may never fail. God grant that whatever edification and building up of souls in Christ have been granted to any of us may endure unto the day of the Lord Jesus. God grant that you, and I, may be found in Christ, and be numbered with His Saints in glory everlasting.

Again, Brethren, I commend myself to your prayers. And I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. May the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do His Will, working in

you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

To Whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, and One God, be ascribed as is most due all honour, power, might, majesty, dominion and glory, world without end. Amen.

•

PRAYERS FOR UNITY.

O GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O LORD JESU CHRIST, Who saidst unto Thine Apostles, "My Peace I leave with

you, My Peace I give unto you," regard not my sins, I beseech Thee, but the faith of Thy Church, and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy Will, Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

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